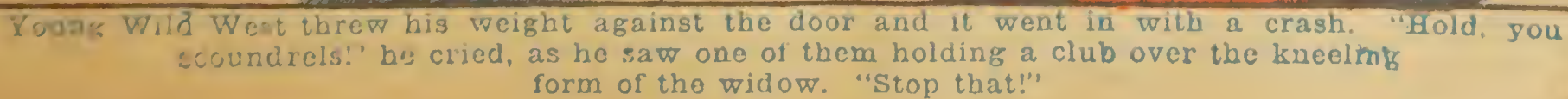


FRANK TOUSEY, PUBLISHER, 168 WEST 23D STREET, NEW YORK.

Price 5 Cents.

By AN OLD SCOUT.
AND OTHER STORIES.



WILD WEST WEEKLY

A Magazine Containing Stories, Sketches, Etc., of Western Life

Issued Weekly—By Subscription \$2.50 per year. Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1916, in the office of the Librarian of Congress, Washington, D. C., by Frank Tousey, Publisher, 168 West 23d Street, New York
Entered at the New York, N. Y., Post Office as Second-Class Matter.

No. 738.

NEW YORK, DECEMBER 8, 1916.

Price 5 Cents.

Young Wild West and the Gold Grabbers

—OR—

THE FIGHT FOR THE WIDOW'S CLAIM

By AN OLD SCOUT

CHAPTER I.

TAMING A RECKLESS CROWD.

"Look out, thar! We're on the rampage, an' any one what gits in our way is apt to git hurt. Look out, you yaller-skinned heathen! You're jest ther one I'm after!"

Swish!

The coils of a lasso whirled through the air; the horse ridden by the man who uttered the words stopped short and then a series of cat-like shrieks filled the air, drowned a second later by a burst of laughter from a dozen throats.

The scene was right in the main street of the mining town of Weston in the heart of the Black Hills; the time a few years ago when things were in a very unsettled condition in the Wild West.

A dozen men, who might have been cowboys, miners, or just plain every-day "bad men," were riding into the town, yelling and whooping, when they happened to catch sight of a Chinaman walking along carrying a basket that was filled with provisions.

The leader let go his lariat and caught the Chinaman about the body with the noose and jerked him off his feet, sending the contents of the basket flying in every direction.

This was certainly very funny in the eyes of the horsemen, but the victim of the joke—if it could be called one—was certainly not of that opinion.

"Whattée do?" he yelled, as he managed to get the lasso from him. "Stoppee! Me good Chinaman, allee samee Melican man. Upsettee flour and ham; spillée coffee, throw sugar on ground. Young Wild West no likee if Wing Wah gittee hurt."

"Ha, ha, ha! Ho, ho, ho!"

The horsemen, who had come to a halt now, laughed uproariously.

They were a rough looking set and armed with hunting knives and revolvers, and they had every appearance of being the class that would as soon fight as cat.

"What did yer let him git ther noose off fur, Tom?" shouted one of them. "Here! I'll jest catch him again."

He let fly his lariat, but the Mongolian saw it coming and dodged it.

Then he started on a run to get away from his tormentors, leaving his basket and the supplies it had contained where they fell.

"Whoop! Let her go, boys! We mustn't let ther yaller heathen git away like that. We'll lasso him an' take him to ther nearest whisky mill an' make him treat. Whoop!"

It was the fellow who had lassoed the Chinaman who yelled this out, and then they all urged their horses forward to overtake their victim.

Just what they might have done to him will never be known, for they were interrupted in their sport.

A dashing looking young fellow mounted on a sorrel horse came around a corner right in front of them, and in a ringing voice exclaimed:

"Stop that, you hoodlums! Let that Chinaman alone!"

The reckless riders pulled up their horses instantly.

It was not because they were afraid and meant to obey, but because they were surprised at receiving a command from one who was only a boy.

The dashing looking young fellow was certainly not twenty-one, yet but he was a man in size, for all that.

He was handsome in both face and figure and wore his chestnut hair hanging down upon his shoulders.

It was a fancy hunting suit of buckskin that his lithe, muscular frame was encased in and a pearl colored sombrero sat rakishly on his head.

"What's the matter, Wing?" he asked, turning to the Chinaman, who had stopped running, and not looking at the reckless gang at all.

"Bad Melican men throw lasso; upsettee groceries, allee samee likee Jack Lobinson," answered the almond-eyed fellow.

"They did, eh? And now they want to hustle you and have more fun with you, do they? Well, I guess not!"

"What's that you say, young feller?" called out the leader of the band of horsemen.

"If you didn't hear just what I said you can guess what it was, I think," was the quick retort.

"I ken, hey? Well, youngster, just look out fur yourself! I'm goin' to yank you off that horse! You're what I call too soon; you're about ten years ahead of your time, I reckon."

"You think so, do you?" and the young fellow rode right up to the speaker. "I guess you fellows are strangers in these parts, are you not? Now, I am going to tell you something. If you don't behave yourselves while you are in this town you will be apt to get hurt."

"Hurt!"

The cowboy laughed heartily and his companions joined in. It was all very amusing to them, it seemed.

"It is good advice I am giving you," went on the boy, not the least abashed by the manner of the men.

"It is, hey? Well, now, I'm goin' to give you a little advice? Jest light out as fast as that nag of yours kin go, or you'll get three or four lariats around your neck! And then you might git jerked off ther earth, for I won't be responsible fur what happens."

You won't, eh? Well, you just behave yourself. To show you that I mean business, I am going to untie the knot in that handkerchief you've got around your neck! Hold still, now!"

With a quick movement, the young horseman pulled a revolver from his belt.

Crack!

The leader of the band of reckless riders threw his head

back and the red handkerchief that had been knotted about his neck in the form of a scarf dropped to the ground.

"Whew!" exclaimed two or three of them in a breath.

They could not understand it.

The rider of the sorrel sat still in the saddle, the revolver still smoking and an amused smile on his face.

Suddenly he flashed a glance at the men and noticed that one of them wore a coat that had buttons on it as large as silver dollars almost.

"Sit still in the saddle!" he exclaimed, as he raised his revolver. "If you move you'll be apt to go under!"

Crack!

One of the buttons disappeared.

Crack!

Another went whizzing through the air and hit a horse on the left, causing the animal to plunge forward and nearly throw its rider.

Crack! Crack!

There had been just four buttons on the coat, but there were none now!

And the man had not moved, for fear of receiving the bullets in his body.

"He, he, he!" giggled the Chinaman, who was now in high glee.

"Say! Who are you, young feller?" gasped the leader of the horsemen.

"My name happens to be Young Wild West," was the reply.

"Well, I reckon I made a mistake in you. I never seen sich shootin' in my life."

"Well, you haven't seen a great deal, then. Just open your mouth and I'll polish your teeth for you."

"No, no! Don't take ther trouble. I'm satisfied."

"Ah! I am glad to hear you say so. Now, just go back there and pick up the things that dropped from the basket when you started in to have fun with the Chinaman. Go ahead! I mean business!"

The boy, who called himself Young Wild West, had drawn another revolver now, and the muzzles of both were leveled at the man.

"I—I reckon I'd better do what you say, Young Wild West."

"Certainly you had. If you don't I'll make a pepper-box out of you. Now, get a move on you!"

It was really wonderful to see how those "bad men" had been tamed.

The leader dismounted without another word, and then two others followed his example.

Young Wild West remained on the handsome sorrel, holding the brace of shooters carelessly.

All the articles were picked up and deposited into the basket, some of them being broken open, however, and a portion of the contents being spilled.

"I'll pay fur ther damage, Young Wild West," said the leader. "I was goin' to do that anyhow, afore we let ther Chinees go."

"Never mind about that," was the reply. "I guess I can stand the loss."

"Oh! You own ther stuff, hey?"

"Yes, I guess that's about it. The Chinaman is my cook."

Some of the men did not seem to think as though their leader was acting right in cooling down, like he had.

But they said nothing just then.

Young Wild West could tell what was running through their minds, however.

"Gentlemen," said he, "I was going home, but I guess I will ride over as far as the Gazoo Hotel. I suppose you are heading for some place where liquor is sold."

"I reckon that's right!" exclaimed one of them.

"All right. I don't drink the stuff myself, but I am not afraid to go where it is sold."

The Chinaman picked up his basket and went peacefully on his way, his face wearing a smile that was "child-like and bland," and the horsemen proceeded down the street, Young Wild West riding along with them.

In less than two minutes they came in sight of three saloons that were almost in a bunch.

One of them was a good-sized place and bore the sign, "Brown's Gazoo Hotel."

The strangers did not act as though they preferred the place, but when Young Wild West dismounted in front of it they followed suit.

They would probably have preferred the place almost opposite, which was more tough looking, by far.

"Boys," said our hero, as he walked upon the hotel stoop, "here are some strangers, who have concluded to behave themselves while they are in Weston. But if they should

happen to forget themselves and make a little noise, remember that they are perfectly harmless."

A laugh went up from the half a dozen men on the stoop.

"Been showin' 'em a few tricks, Wild?" said the proprietor of the place, questioningly.

"Oh! Nothing to speak of," was the reply. "They were having a little fun with my Chinaman when I happened along and stopped it."

Three of the men had been whispering together during the ride over from the scene of the trouble, and they now stepped forward, each with a drawn revolver.

"I calculate that you can't make fun of us any kind of fashion, Young Wild West," exclaimed one of them. "Cause we was satisfied to let you have your own way over there, don't say that you've got a right to make fun of us afore a crowd."

"You just drop that shooter, or I'll drop you!"

As the words rang out the fellow found himself staring into the cold muzzle of a revolver.

How Young Wild West had got it under his nose so quickly he did not understand.

"An' you other galoots put your shooters back in your belt, or I'll begin to let lead fly!" cried a tall man with long, black hair, stepping up to the trio.

The men turned all colors.

But they obeyed quickly enough.

The one Young Wild West had covered dropped his weapon as though it had been a hot potato.

"I reckon you're too soon on the shoot fur me," he gasped. "I cave!"

"All right. Now, you say I am too good on the shoot for you—what are you good on?"

"Fightin' with my fists, though, I s'pose I'm too big fur you at that game."

"Oh, I guess you are not too big. I never met a man yet who was too big. I think you need a good thrashing, so just take off your belt and step out here!"

As Young Wild West said this he took off his own belt and handed it to the tall man at his side.

CHAPTER II.

WILD AGREES TO GO TO PHIPP'S RUN.

Though the cowboy was somewhat surprised at Young Wild West's willingness to fight him, he did not back down.

He got off his belt in a hurry and handed it to one of his followers.

"I'm bigger an' stronger than you, so look out when I hit you. I hit awful hard," he said.

"All right. Just hit me as hard as you can," answered Wild. "I won't object if you knock my head right off my shoulders."

There was a confident smile playing about the boy's lips that some of the sharper of the horsemen put down as meaning something.

They all knew that the man who had offered to fight Young Wild West was a good one at the game of fisticuffs, but the actions of the boy puzzled them.

He seemed to be perfectly at his ease.

"Before you show me how you can fight I would like to know your name," said our hero, calmly facing the man, who was nearly a head taller than he.

"Oh, my name is Larry Liver, an' I'm a cowboy by trade an' a rip-snorter by perfession."

"Good! Now, let yourself go!"

As Wild spoke he made a feint with his left, and his opponent stepped aside to avoid the blow he thought was coming.

But when he saw that our hero had not moved an inch, he got mad.

"I don't make believe hit," he growled. "I do ther real thing. How does that catch yer?"

He let a vicious swing go, which, if it had landed, would surely have put Wild on his back.

But the big fist did not come within a foot of him!

Young Wild West ducked and sprang forward close to his man.

His right shot out and caught him just under the heart, and there being an upward swing to the punch, the cowboy was lifted off his feet and down he went, his feet sticking up in the air.

"Get up!" cried the boy. "I won't hit you when you're down."

The blow had taken considerable of the man's strength away, but he was not long in getting up.

But instead of striking at Wild, he made a grab for his legs to throw him down.

Our hero was perfectly cool, and he easily saw what the rascal's game was.

So he quickly wound his right arm around his neck and seized him by the thigh with the left, and then, exerting all his strength, he lifted him up and whirled him over as though he had been a bag of rags!

The cowboy let go his hold the instant he found his feet leave the ground, so it was easy for our hero to throw him over upon his back on the ground.

With a heavy thud he landed, the breath knocked from his body and all the fight taken out of him.

But Wild was not going to let it go at that.

He stooped down and caught the fellow by the collar of his shirt, and exclaimed:

"Come, get up. We want to finish this fight. I am going to give you a thrashing that you will remember."

Then he dragged him to his feet, and as soon as he was standing gave him a straight left on the chin and let him drop again.

The big cowboy lay still on the ground, and, looking around at the rest of the gang, our hero smiled and shook his head as though he was puzzled.

"Is he the best fighter you have in your crowd?" he asked.

"I reckon he is," replied the leader.

"Pshaw! I thought I was going to have a chance."

The men looked at each other, while the bystanders smiled.

Half a minute later the defeated fighter got up.

Then Young Wild West went into the hotel, followed by the tall man, who was attired in a hunting suit similar to his own.

This was Cheyenne Charlie, an ex-government scout, and one of our hero's faithful friends and partner in business.

"I reckon there's no end of fools," said Cheyenne Charlie. "Wild, I wonder if you ever will strike a feller that you can't handle?"

"I hope not," was the laughing retort. "I am not anxious to get hurt. But I can always tell what such fellows amount to before I tackle them. That man is big and strong, but he is as slow as molasses in the winter time. You can tell that by his actions. I always depend upon my quickness more than my strength."

"Oh, I know that. I do, too, in some cases. Well, I reckon ther whole lot of ther measly coyotes don't feel so rambunctious now."

The cowboys and miners now came into the place, and they behaved themselves very well.

Though it was plain that some of them did not like the way Young Wild West had treated them, they said nothing.

Our hero and Cheyenne Charlie remained in the place long enough to buy cigars and light them, and then as calmly as though nothing had happened, they walked outside.

They had just got there when a young fellow about Wild's age, who was attired in a hunting suit, came up in the company of a young man whose general appearance indicated that he was a stranger to the West.

"We were just looking for you, Wild," called out the boy. "Here is a gentleman who wants to see you on business. He came to the office, and, after waiting quite a long time for you to come I thought I would fetch him over this way to look for you. Mr. Ford Palliser, Young Wild West."

"How are you, Mr. Palliser? I am glad to make your acquaintance," and the two shook hands.

This is Cheyenne Charlie, the scout, Mr. Palliser," went on the young fellow, and Charlie gave the stranger a hearty grip.

"So Mr. Palliser wants to see me on business, eh, Jim?" said Young Wild West.

"Yes," answered the boy, who was Jim Dart, a chum of our hero, and also one of his partners in the mining business.

"Well, shall we go over to the office of the Wild West Mining and Improvement Company, or will it do right here?"

"It will do right here, I guess," retorted Dart. "He has told me what his business is, and it won't take him five minutes to let you know all about it."

"Hardly as long as that," spoke up Palliser. "There is not much for me to tell you."

"Well, let's sit down over here, then," and our hero nodded

to a couple of empty benches on the side stoop of the hotel.

It was a warm afternoon in early fall, and the shade from the big oak that stood in front of the Gazoo Hotel was rather inviting just then.

The four walked over and took seats.

They could hear the crowd in the bar talking and laughing, but this did not interfere with them.

"I came to Weston to ask you if you would go to Phipp's Run with me," began Palliser. "I received word that my brother was shot a month ago by a gang that called themselves the Gold Grabbers. My brother's wife is in possession of his claim, and dares not leave it until she gets some one to protect her while she gets away with the gold that has been dug from the claim. The claim is a rich one, so I understand, and as there is no such thing as law and order in the place, she stands a poor show, unless someone goes to her aid. Every villain in the camp is waiting to get possession of the widow's claim, so her message to me states."

Young Wild West was interested right away.

Not only did he believe in helping those who were in the right, but he was of a chivalric nature, too.

Here was a widow being hounded by a gang of scoundrels who were bent on getting hold of her claim and taking her belongings!

That was the whole thing in a nutshell.

"I guess we can find time to go over to Phipp's Run with you, Mr. Palliser," he said. "What do you think about it, boys?"

"I reckon so," exclaimed Cheyenne Charlie.

"Of course we can!" declared Jim Dart.

"Phipp's Run is not many miles from here, so I have heard," said Palliser.

"No. It is only about seventy miles from here," answered Wild.

"I am from Fon du Lac, Wisconsin," resumed the young man. "My brother came to the Black Hills a little over a year ago, and married soon after he got here. I have never seen his wife, but I hear that she is an out-and-out Western girl, and that is why she has managed to hold the claim since his death. She wrote me and asked me to get a few good men to come to Phipp's Run and help her. I heard all about Young Wild West and his partners in Deadwood, and I thought it worth my while to come to Weston and ask you to go with me. I have money to pay for your trouble."

"Never mind the paying part of it," said Young Wild West. "I have studied you pretty well since I met you, and I have come to the conclusion that you are all right, as we Westerners say. In other words, I believe you are honest and truthful, and when I form such an opinion of any one I seldom make a mistake."

"Thank you for your opinion, then."

"We will go over to Phipp's Run with you and take a hand in this game. I have never been to the place, but I have heard that it needs a little overhauling. If the widow still holds the claim when we get there I'll guarantee that no gold grabbers or any other kind of grabbers will take it from her."

"Good! I am very glad I came to see you. I am told that when you set out to do a thing you always do it."

"I try very hard, anyhow."

"And I have also heard that you are not afraid of anything that grows and that you can whip your weight in wildcats."

"Well, never mind about that part of it. I have a way of making things hum when I get started among a gang of rascals—that much I will admit."

They talked away for fifteen minutes longer, and Young Wild West and his two partners learned all that Ford Palliser knew about the case.

But this was sufficient to cause them to feel a deep interest in the widow, in one sense of the word, but he was a gritty fellow for all that.

He was willing, and knew how to take his own part.

Young Wild West had been wondering what would be the next thing to turn up, as he was getting anxious to go out and hunt up something in the line of adventure.

Here was his chance.

"When shall we start for Phipp's Run?" asked Palliser, after they thoroughly understood each other.

"The first thing to-morrow morning," answered Wild. "That will give us time to get things so we can leave without having anything on our minds."

"All right. Is this a good place to stop at?"

"You can't beat Brown's Gazoo, not if you travel the Wild

West over for a hotel. You pay for what you get here, but get it good."

"That's what I like. I have seen just enough of this part of the country to make me think that a fellow is not safe in every place he drops into."

"I should reckon not," spoke up Cheyenne Charlie, "unless he's a mighty quick shot an' not afraid to pull on a measly coyote when he's bothered."

"Well, I never shot a man yet, and I hope I never will." The scout laughed.

"I reckon you'll learn all about it when you git to ther camp where the Widder's Claim is," he said.

"Well, let us go in and have something."

As they entered the barroom they found the cowboys getting in pretty lively.

They had been drinking about as fast as they could be waited upon, and some of them were getting very reckless, not to say boisterous.

"Whoop! Here comes a tenderfoot!" yelled the leader of the gang. "Boys, let's make him set 'em up!"

The words were scarcely out of his mouth when he caught Palliser by the collar and pulled him up to the bar.

"Hold on!" cried the young woman. "I am not used to being handled that way. If you want a drink I will pay for one of you. But just keep your hands off me."

"That's right!" spoke up Young Wild West. "You fellows just take it easy there."

But they were full of false courage now, and the grudge they had formed against our hero came upon them with plenty of force just then.

One of them pulled his revolver and let a shot go at the floor near the feet of Palliser.

"I reckon we're runnin' things in here jest now!" the fellow cried.

Crack!

It was Wild who fired this time.

The bullet struck the shooter in the hand of the man and grazed his knuckle just enough to draw blood.

The weapon fell to the floor and the cowboy uttered a yell of pain and began dancing wildly about the room.

Then it was that a free fight started in the place.

CHAPTER III.

THE RIDE TO PHIPP'S RUN.

"Keep your shooters in your belts!" cried Young Wild West in a ringing voice. "If you don't want to die don't attempt to fire a shot."

The half-drunken men surged forward and tried to force our friends into a corner.

But they all had their revolvers in their hands by this time, even to Ford Palliser.

Crack!

Cheyenne Charlie fired just in time to prevent one of the villains from plunging a knife in our hero's back.

Crack, crack, crack!

The scout had got started now, and he let go into them right and left.

Another man went down, and two ran limping to the door.

"Whoopee! Whoopee!" shouted the scout. "Sneak, you measly coyotes! Sneak, or take your medicine."

Young Wild West had not fired a shot, but he was waving the muzzle of his revolver right in the faces of the men and forcing them toward the door.

Jim Dart was right at his side, doing the same thing, and Palliser was following them up.

The starch was taken out of the rascals in short order.

They had seen two of their number fall, and that was sufficient for them to realize that they were in tight quarters. "Out you go!" shouted Wild. "Don't go to shoot, for if you do there won't be a thing left of you inside of a minute! I mean business now, and I don't want to kill any of you unless I have to."

"Let up!" cried one tough. "Don't shoot. Call off that pard of yours, or he'll have us thinned out so we won't know ourselves."

"Let up, Charlie!" called out Wild. "They have had enough of it."

"All right," was the retort. "But they meant you, an' I wasn't goin' to allow it. Them that's gone down ought to be there, an' they are there. Some of 'em won't git up very soon, either, I reckon!"

The barroom was now cleared of everyone.

Even Brown, the proprietor, came out.

He thought there might be some more shooting outside, so he held a shooter in his hand, ready to join Young Wild West's side.

But the third time they had come in contact with our hero had settled the men.

He was too much for them, and they knew it.

It made no difference whether they were drunk or sober, they could not down him.

Those who had fallen were taken out of the place, and then the gang proceeded to the other side of the street.

"Now I reckon we kin have that drink you asked us to take," said Cheyenne Charlie to Palliser, as he placed his revolver back into the holster.

"All right," was the reply. "We will have it without any further delay. Gracious! But I did not think the row was going to turn out the way it has, though. I really thought it would be a miracle if I got out of the place alive."

"Well, it did look kinder hot there for a while. I sorter got mad and then I let myself go. One feller come within an ace of lettin' his knife go into Wild's back. I had to drop him, you know."

"Oh, of course you did."

Palliser was just a little bit nervous over what had occurred, so the scout advised him to take something strong, which he did.

A few minutes later they all came out of the hotel, and, taking his horses by the bridle, Wild led the way over to the postoffice.

His pretty sweetheart Arietta Murdock, assisted her grandfather in his duties as postmaster, and she was at the door, waiting for Wild when he came up.

"What was all the shooting about, Wild?" she asked.

"Oh, a few strangers came in to run the town, that's all," he answered.

Then he introduced Palliser, after which he told the pretty girl how they were going to Phipp's Run to help a widow on the morrow.

"Go ahead, Wild," Arietta said. "If anybody can keep those Gold Grabbers from getting the widow's money, you can."

"That's right!" exclaimed Jim Dart. "See how well his sweetheart knows him, Mr. Palliser?"

"That is so," replied the tenderfoot. "Well, I suppose Miss Murdock ought to know him well."

"She thinks she does, but wait till she gets married to him," spoke up Cheyenne Charlie. "Then she'll find out all his bad qualities soon enough."

This caused a laugh all around.

After a little further conversation Ford Palliser went back to the hotel and Charlie and Jim walked over to the office of the company they belonged to.

Wild remained with his sweetheart and chatted with her until supper time.

Then he walked home with her, leading his horse.

"Be careful when you get over to Phipp's Run, Wild," she said as they parted.

"Oh, yes!" he answered. "I am always careful."

"Not so very careful, either. You run right into danger sometimes, just as though you placed no value on your life."

"Nonsense! I always know what I am doing. Sometimes I get into trouble unexpectedly. But that is liable to happen to anybody. Why, Et! See how many times you have got into trouble yourself!"

"That is so, Wild. But I am quite sure that I never ran straight into danger, knowing it, unless it was for your sake."

"That's right, little one," and the handsome face of the dashing young Westerner took on a serious expression. "But never mind. I am going on this little trip partly because I want excitement, and partly because I feel it my duty to help the poor widow over in Phipp's Run. Just imagine that you were the widow, now, and that someone was going to help you hold all you had in the world. That is the way to look at it, Et."

"All right, Wild. I am sure that I haven't the least objection to your going. Only do be careful. They may be a hard lot—these Gold Grabbers, as you say they call themselves—and there's no telling just when you will meet with the unexpected."

"There! Don't say any more. It will be all right. If I really thought that I was going to run into any unneces-

sary danger I would take you along, so I could have someone to save me at the last moment. Now, just let it drop, Et, and be a good girl."

"All right," and the girl laughed merrily. "You know your own business better than I do, anyway."

That evening Young Wild West and his partners arranged to leave the first thing in the morning with Ford Palliser.

As Phipp's Run was but seventy miles from Weston, they expected to make the journey in two days.

True, a part of the way was pretty rough, but their horses were used to the mountain trails.

Though Wild was around about the town until after ten that night, he saw nothing more of the gang of rascals who had tried to run things their own way when they came into the town.

Palliser was ready and waiting with a horse when Young Wild West, Cheyenne Charlie, and Jim Dart rode up to the Gazoo shortly after daylight the next morning.

He showed how glad he was to see them put in an appearance by rushing to meet them and shake their hands.

"I am so glad!" he exclaimed. "I have been thinking that it may be too late when we get there, after all."

"Well, you said your sister-in-law wrote you that she would be all right so long as she did not leave her claim, didn't you?" replied Wild.

"Yes, that is what she wrote."

"Well, the chances are that she knew what she was doing when she wrote that way, then. You say she is a genuine Western girl, and they generally have a knowledge of things in that line, you know."

"Well, I hope we get there before anything happens to her."

"I have an idea that we will. We'll be there to-morrow night, and we will soon find out something about the widow's claim and these Gold Grabbers you speak about."

Phipps Run lay to the northwest of Weston, and they took the wagon trail to Devil Creek, from which place the trail was not much more than a bridle path.

Our friends halted at noon next day, and when they sat down to rest and eat their dinner they had made more than three-quarters the distance.

"We'll git there in ther daylight, I reckon," observed Cheyenne Charlie.

"I think so," spoke up Jim Dart, "though we might have some pretty tough going before night."

"No, I guess it won't be any worse than it has been," said Wild. "This is the first time I have ever been in this part of the hills, though I have passed within a dozen miles of this trail."

"All trails and places look alike to me," declared Palliser. "I have been used to city life ever since I was born, and when I came out here I was surprised. I must say that I rather like the free and easy manner in which the miners live, though. They seem to enjoy themselves, and they all look very healthy."

Just as they were making a move to saddle their horses and resume the journey, they heard the sounds made by horses' hoofs.

As they had not met a person since they left Devil Creek, they wondered who it was coming over the same trail they had been following.

"Be ready for business, boys!" exclaimed Young Wild West. "You can't tell what might happen."

The next minute some nine horsemen appeared.

That they had been riding pretty hard was evident, for some of their horses were covered with foam.

There was nothing really strange about there being a number of horsemen following the trail, but when Wild looked at them and found they were the rascals he had given a shaking up in Weston, he thought it was just a little peculiar that they should appear just then.

He stood leaning against his horse when the gang rode up and halted.

"Why, hello!" called out the leader of the men. "If it ain't Young Wild West I'll chew my boot-straps!"

"Well, that's funny, ain't it?" cried the big villain, who went by the name of Larry Liver. "Who ever thought that we'd meet him here, boys?"

The men shook their heads, and then our hero came to the conclusion that they really were surprised at the meeting.

He counted them, and found there were nine of them.

A couple of them had bandages on their arms, and were hardly fit to do much fighting.

"Well, it seems a little odd that you fellows should be going the same way we are," said our hero, as he looked

at the gang in a cool way. "Where are you bound to, anyhow?"

"To a place called Phipp's Run," answered Larry Liver. "One of our crowd has got a rich claim over there, an' we've agreed to go over an' help him work it."

"Oh, I see. Then you haven't all been there?"

"No! Only one in ther gang has been there, an' that is Sam Finkelstein, ther one what owns ther claim."

A dark-featured man with a sinister eye and very prominent nose nodded, and said:

"I am der man, my friend, what have lived at Phipp's Run. I was there when the place was named. Nathan Phipps was a very dear friend of mine, but he died of a broken heart—broken by the bullet of a very bad man. Phipps, he have made a great run on a faro bank in Deadwood just before we come to the place, and when we divide his money we bury him and call it Phipp's Run. Nathan Phipps was a very dear friend of mine, so I luilded my shanty over his grave."

"I see," retorted Wild. "You shot and robbed the man, and then founded a camp in his name. You are a very enterprising fellow, Mr. Sam Finkelstein. I'll bet you are a genius at making money."

"Do not accuse me of what I have not done, my young friend."

"Well, all right. Let it drop at that, then. You fellows look tired. I suppose you are going to take a rest, so we will go on."

"You ain't goin' to Phipp's Run, are yer?" asked the leader.

"Well, if this trail leads to it we might stop there for a while."

"Well, if you do git there don't say that you an' me met, will yer?"

"Met you! Why, I thought you had never been there,"

"I ain't, but there's them there what knows me, jest ther same."

"Oh, I see. Well, what's your name?"

"I go by the name of Tricky Tom. My brother runs ther rum joint what's in ther camp, an' I want to take him by surprise. So jest don't say that you met me."

"All right. We shan't say that we met you. Good day! And just see to it that you behave yourselves when you get to Phipp's Run."

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed Finkelstein. "That was a good one."

Our friends now rode on.

Wild had not taken much notice of the dark fellow with the big nose before, but it now occurred to him that he was about as bad as anyone in the crowd.

Just before sunset they arrived at the mining camp.

CHAPTER IV.

THE WIDOW'S CLAIM

"This isn't what I call very much of a place," observed Ford Palliser, as our friends rode into the mining camp and halted in front of the most pretentious looking of the score of shanties that were scattered about.

"No," answered Young Wild West. "You must not expect to find much when you get out into the heart of the Black Hills, you know. This is only a little mining camp to-day, but next year it may be a city. However, it is more apt to be out of existence by that time. It all depends on how the gold dust pans out and the class of men that settles here."

The building they had stopped in front of was adorned with several rudely painted signs, and, as our friends looked them over, they found that a little of everything needful to a miner could be purchased there.

One of the signs read:

"Picks and shovels at the lowest prices; whisky \$1 a big drink."

Several men were lounging in front of the place, and they looked at the newcomers in an interested way.

Wild was the first to dismount.

"Is this camp called Phipp's Run?" he asked of no one in particular.

"I reckon it are, young feller," replied a big fellow with a scraggy beard. "Jest make yourself at home."

"Thank you, I will."

Pulling the bridle rein over his horse's head, Wild walked into the store.

Behind the rough counter that ran almost the full length of the store was a tall man with gray whiskers, and, as our hero looked at him, it struck him very forcibly that he resembled the rascal who called himself Sam Finklestein.

"How are you, my friend?" was the question he put out, and then bowed and grinned, at the same time rubbing his hands together expectantly.

"Oh, I am pretty well," answered Wild in his offhand way. "Are you the boss of this store?"

"Yes. What can I do for you, my friend?"

"Can you tell me if there is anyone living around here by the name of Palliser?"

The storekeeper gave a start and looked at his questioner keenly.

"There was a man by that name, but he is dead," he replied, speaking slowly, as though he hardly knew just what sort of a reply to make.

"He is dead, eh? Was he married or single?"

"He was married. He left a widow."

The storekeeper spoke right out now, as though he had made up his mind to be fair.

"Where does the widow live?"

"In the last shanty to the left. She is the best lookin' lady of the seven, which is all there is in Phipp's Run, my friend, but she does not want a new husband, so you had better leave her be."

"Oh, I am not looking for a wife," retorted our hero, smiling at the man's remark. "I just want to see her on a little business, that's all."

"Well, my young friend, I must tell you that the men of this town have made it a rule that them women folks must be left alone. No one is allowed to bother with a lady."

"And no one is allowed to try to take a claim away from any of them, either, I suppose?"

As Wild said this he noticed that the storekeeper colored.

"Certainly not, my young friend. That is a foolish thing to say."

"Well, it just came into my head. That is why I said it. Say! Your name is Finklestein, is it not?"

"That is my name, my friend."

"I thought so."

"Why did you think so?"

"Well, I met your brother over in Weston."

"You did?"

"Yes."

"Where is Sam now?"

"Oh, he will be here in a little while."

"Ah! What can I do for you, my friend? You surely want to buy something?"

"How is the Widow Palliser off for supplies?"

"I don't know, but I think she needs some."

"You do, eh?"

"Yes, she has not bought anything here in three weeks."

"What has she been living on?"

"Don't ask me, my friend. She is afraid to leave her claim—or the claim that belonged to her husband, rather. She sent over to get what she wanted by another woman, but three weeks ago the woman would not come for her longer. The widow is very rich, and she is afraid to leave her shanty for fear her money and gold will be stolen."

"So that is how it stands, is it? Well, you just put up a full supply of flour, bacon, coffee, sugar, and what other things you think she must be in need of. Hurry up, too, Mr. Finklestein!"

Cheyenne Charlie and Palliser stepped into the store just then, leaving Jim outside with the horses.

The man looked hard at the dashing-looking young fellow before him and then proceeded to fill his order.

There was a strange smile on his face, however, which Wild could not quite understand.

"Boys," said he, turning to the scout and Palliser, "this is Mr. Finklestein, a brother of the man we met in Weston."

"Ah," exclaimed Charlie. "He looks like ther measly coyote, hanged if he don't."

Charlie had a way of speaking what he thought, no matter who got hurt by it.

The storekeeper, who seemed to be so strangely out of place in that part of the country, cast an angry glance at him, but quickly changed it to a smile and began humming a tune.

He soon had several packages put up, and when they were ready he looked at Wild and said:

"Twenty-five dollars, please, my friend."

Our hero knew he was being overcharged, but he paid the money without any protest.

"Gather them up, boys, and come on!" he exclaimed.

They did so and quietly left the store.

Then, leading their horses, they walked in the direction the storekeeper told Wild the Widow Palliser lived.

They had not got far from the store when they saw Finklestein outside talking to the men who were lounging there.

The result was that about a dozen started after them.

"There's trouble ahead," observed Young Wild West, smiling at his companions. "Well, it might as well begin right away. The sooner it starts the sooner it will be over with."

"That's right," nodded Cheyenne Charlie, loosening the revolvers in their holsters. "They're an ugly lookin' lot of galoots, ain't they? There ain't an honest lookin' man in ther bunch. I was lookin' at 'em afore I went in ther shanty."

"They don't want us to go to the widow's house, I guess," spoke up Palliser, shrugging his shoulders uneasily.

"No. They have been keeping her from getting supplies for the past three weeks, so she would be starved out and quit the claim," answered Wild. "Well, if she is alive we will fix things for her, and don't forget it! That crowd won't scare us, nor will the other gang that is coming. It's going to be a fight for the widow's claim, and the widow must win!"

"That's the way to talk!" cried Jim Dart. "Now, just let them open up their game."

They got a little faster move on them and soon reached the house.

As they paused in front of the door it was opened and a good-looking young woman of twenty-five, attired in black, appeared, a rifle in her hand.

"What do you want?" she asked apprehensively.

"I am your brother-in-law, Ford Palliser," answered the tenderfoot.

"And we have come to put up a fight to hold your claim for you," added Wild.

"Oh," and a look of joy came over the widow's face. "I am so glad. I could not have held out over two or three days longer. They are all against me, it seems, and they have been trying to starve me out."

"Well, here are some provisions for you. Just take them inside, and then we will help you get supper ready."

As they were handing over the articles purchased at the store a rifle shot rang out and a bullet whizzed past the head of Cheyenne Charlie and buried itself in the door casing.

The scout wheeled around as quick as a flash, and saw the smoke curling from the muzzle of a rifle in the hands of one of the advancing men.

He swung his rifle to his shoulder, but he was not quick enough, for Wild had caught sight of the would-be murderer first.

Crack!

Our hero's rifle rang out sharp and clear on the evening air and the man fell.

"That's one of them gone," he said calmly. "Now let them come on, and we'll show them what we're made of."

Charlie and Jim stood ready to fire at the least provocation, and the crowd came to a halt.

Evidently they did not know just what course to pursue.

"Gentlemen!" called out Young Wild West, "if you want to fight it out let yourselves go! We will show you how well we can shoot. When we press a trigger the bullet always goes just where we want it to. We never miss!"

Palliser was hurriedly getting the stores inside the shanty while this was going on, and when he had finished he unslung his rifle and brought it to his shoulder.

"I will do my best," he said grimly.

But there was nothing more to be done just then, as it proved, for the gang talked together a while, and then started slowly back for the store, carrying the body of the villain Wild had dropped with them.

The face of the widow was radiant when she saw this move.

"I was all ready to take a hand in the shooting," she said. "I've felt it my duty to stay here and save the gold poor Dick left me. The scoundrels know it is in the house, and that is why they are trying to drive me from the claim. The claim itself is worth a whole lot, but they want the gold that has been dug out more than anything. I

registered a vow when my husband died that his murderers should never have his claim as long as I lived."

"And that vow shall be kept!" exclaimed our hero. "You are going to hold the claim till you get ready to dispose of it, if every enemy you have got has to go under. I pledge my word on that!"

All but Cheyenne Charlie went inside the shanty now. The scout offered to remain on guard, and our hero knew that no better man lived than he for that purpose.

Palliser then introduced Wild and Jim to the widow, and she shook them warmly by the hand.

"I guess some of the men here know of you, Mr. West," she said to Wild. "I have often heard my husband mention your name, though he never met you."

"Well, if they don't know him now they will before he leaves Phipp's Run," declared Jim.

The widow now bustled about to get something to eat.

"For the last three weeks I have had nothing to eat but some potatoes I had on hand, and what few things the wife of Finklestein, the storekeeper, managed to smuggle here to me. She is a good woman, but her husband is a scoundrel. It lays between him and his brother as to the one who shot my husband."

Then she turned her gaze upon Palliser, and added:

"You bear a striking resemblance to poor Dick, Mr. Palliser."

"Don't call me that. Call me Ford. You are my sister-in-law, you know."

"All right, then. You just call me Fannie, if you will. Oh, I can't help thinking of how they shot my poor husband. He was the richest miner in the camp, and they knew it. He did not die till he got here to the shanty, and there was only breath enough left in him for him to say 'Finkle—' That was all he said, but I knew it was one of the Finklesteins that did it."

She was weeping now, so Jim pushed her gently aside and went ahead with the preparations for supper.

He soon had some bacon sizzling over a fire and the coffee pot on.

Wild had purchased some hardtack, and as the widow had been cooking some potatoes, they would not go hungry.

She soon recovered from her fit of weeping, and in less than half an hour the meal was ready.

Charlie reported that the coast was clear, and insisted on standing guard until the rest ate.

It was dark by the time they finished, so for the first time in many days the widow lighted a lamp.

CHAPTER V.

THE GOLD GRABBERS.

When the rascally gang picked up the man who had fallen under the unerring aim of Young Wild West and started back for the store, they were all of the opinion that they had struck a hard proposition.

Finklestein, the storekeeper, stood in front of the store when they came up, his face the picture of amazement.

"What is the matter?" he cried. "Are you afraid of them?"

"If you feel like passin' in your chips, go on over to ther widder's shanty," answered the man who had led the crowd.

"You ain't afraid of 'em, are you?"

"Well, there's one of 'em what kin shoot straighter than we kin, anyhow. He jest proved that."

"Which one was it who downed Jack?"

"Ther boy with ther long hair."

"Ther one who bought ther things of me?"

"Yes."

"He seemed to be a very likely sort of a fellow. I wonder who he is, my friends?"

No one seemed to know, and while they were speculating over what had happened, the clatter of hoofs came to their ears.

Looking down the single street of the camp, they beheld a gang of horsemen approaching.

"My brother Sam!" cried the storekeeper. "Ah! Now we will know something about it. The boy with the long hair said he met Sam in Weston. We will know all about it now, my friends."

Sure enough, it was the gang of rascals under the lead of the man called Tricky Tom, who were approaching.

They reined in their foaming steeds in front of the shanty store and dismounted.

One of the first objects that met their gaze was the body of the dead miner.

"Who done that?" asked Sam Finklestein, looking at his brother.

"The young fellow with the long hair," was the reply. "Who is he, my brother?"

"Who is he? Why, he is Young Wild West!"

"Young Wild West!"

The gang looked at each other and showed how uneasy they were.

"What's he doin' over here?" said one of the miners, who was evidently the leader of the crowd. "What did you want to go to Weston fur, anyhow, Sam? I bet he come here jest because he found out who you was."

"No he didn't!" was the answer. "I got my gang together to do what you fellers wanted to be done, so it couldn't be laid to ther residents here, an' on our way back we happened to strike Weston. Young Wild West, nor any one else didn't know where we was from, or where we was goin'. Them fellers was comin' over here anyhow, an' you kin jest bet that they come over to help ther widow out of her trouble."

There was a short silence after this, and then Sam Finklestein proceeded to introduce the gang he had brought with him.

The fact was that the brothers really ran the town to suit them.

They had willing tools in the persons of about all the miners at Phipp's Run, and, knowing that Dick Palliser had struck it rich, they wanted his gold, and his claim as well.

The young miner had been shot, so they would have a chance to get his belongings, but his widow proved to be what they called "too contrary for anything," and they failed.

None of them felt like killing the widow outright, so the wily storekeeper sent his brother away to get a gang that would not stop at anything, and let them put the widow out of the way, on the promise of receiving a part of the gold that was dug from the claim afterward.

The Widow's Claim, as it had been named since the death of her husband, was worth more than all the rest put together in Phipp's Run, and this was saying a whole lot, since it was quite a rich gold-bearing district.

Things had been working to the full satisfaction of the brothers until Young Wild West and his friends came into the town so suddenly.

There were perhaps a dozen miners in the place who took no part in the doings of the villains, but they were afraid to oppose the gang, and the only thing they could do would be to leave and report it if the widow was slain by the followers of the Finklesteins.

That is why the wily storekeeper, who was really the head of the gang, had sent his brother to get some outsiders to commit the foul crime.

Some of the bad ones had wives and children, and they could hardly have been induced to kill the pretty little woman in black, no matter how much gold they got from it.

But they were perfectly willing to let someone else do it.

It was now quite dark, and the storekeeper called all hands into his place and treated them.

As he was not in the habit of doing this, expressions of surprise went up from the gang.

Finklestein seldom gave anything away that he could use himself, but somehow he managed to get a great deal of what others had.

The men knew this, but they liked him, for all that.

He had a way of painting glowing pictures for them, making them believe that he was going to make them as rich some day.

The villains just to arrive were thirsty, and when the first round of drinks had been swallowed, Tricky Tom, the leader, called for another.

The men seemed to be pretty well supplied with money, for Larry Liver and two of the others set them up in quick succession.

Then Breakneck Bob, as the leader of the Phipp's Run miners was called, did the honors.

By this time all hands were getting pretty well under the vile stuff Finklestein sold under the name of whisky.

But the storekeeper was doing a rushing business, and the way he rubbed his hands and smiled at his customers showed how he liked it.

"I told Young Wild West it was my brother that run

ther whisky mill here, an' I wish it was," spoke up Tricky Tom, looking at Sam Finklestein and winking at the rest. "If he was my brother I'd order another round an' let him charge it ag'in me."

There was a laugh at this remark and the storekeeper shook his head.

"I would not trust my own brother for whisky, my friend," he said, rubbing his hands as though he was giving them a good washing without any water or soap.

"Well, give us a drink, anyhow," spoke up Sam. "The laugh is on me, and I guess I can stand it."

This was another thing that seldom happened, and the men seemed eager to get the drinks before he changed his mind.

The glasses were filled and the health of Sam was drank amid loud cheering and laughter.

It was the starting of what the reckless gang called a good time. The storekeeper took in money hand over fist, and all hands soon became gloriously drunk.

We say all hands, but we should omit the Finklestein brothers.

They never got that way when there was anything to be gained by staying sober.

Sam jumped in to help his brother wait on the store.

There were customers who wanted something else besides whisky, and some of them were women.

Larry Liver, the big cowboy, was disposed to be very respectful to the latter.

He chucked a buxom woman under the chin, who happened to be the wife of Breakneck Bob.

Then some real excitement started.

"Look out, you slab-sided galoot! I'm goin' to shoot you fur insultin' my wife!" cried the leader of the miners.

"Go ahead an' shoot!" retorted the villain, who was now just enough under the influence of the bad liquor he had imbibed to be ready for anything. "No miserable sand-digger, like you are, kin scare me!"

The two men were not more than a dozen feet apart at the time, and they both began blazing away at once.

But neither was trying hard to hit the other, it seemed, for the bullets either went too high or else hit the floor near their feet.

Probably half a dozen shots had been fired when who should come in but Young Wild West and Cheyenne Charlie.

Our two friends had decided that it would be a good idea to come to the store and let the villains in the camp see the sort of material they were made of.

Wild saw the woman who had been insulted trying vainly to get over the counter to get out of the way of the flying bullets, so he promptly called out:

"Stop that! The first man to fire another shot will drop dead in his tracks!"

Instantly a deathly silence came over the crowd.

But it was broken by the crack of a revolver a second later.

One of the miners had fired at our hero.

The bullet clipped a lock of hair from his head, but he never moved a peg.

Crack!

His shooter spoke, and, true to his word, the fellow dropped.

Waving the still smoking weapon back and forth in front of the men, he exclaimed:

"Look out, now! I never miss when I fire. Does any one else want to step out?"

There was no reply.

"Say yes, somebody!" cried Cheyenne Charlie. "I'm jest itchin' to let some hot lead fly. This here camp is one of ther worst places I ever struck, an' I think it oughter be cleaned out an' started over again. Won't somebody say that he wants to go under? Great caterpillars! I can't stand it much longer! I must shoot! Look out fur your nose, you measly coyote!"

Crack!

He fired and the bullet from his revolver grazed the end of the storekeeper's nose, causing the blood to flow in a stream.

Finklestein fell back and sat in a barrel that was half filled with something and became wedged there.

Then his brother made a move as though he were going to answer the shot.

"Look out!" cried Wild, and then taking a quick aim, he shot off the end of his nose as clean as a whistle. "There goes a piece of your smelling apparatus! I'll trim your right eyebrow with the very next shot!"

The woman grabbed the articles she had bought and slid for the door, forgetting to pay for them.

This brought Finklestein to his senses.

"Hey!" he called out excitedly. "Breakneck Bob, your wife has forgot to pay for the groceries."

"Never mind ther groceries," retorted Cheyenne Charlie, laughing heartily. "You won't need any money, or groceries either, if you don't watch out. We're here fur business, we are, an' we want you measly coyotes to understand it."

"That's right!" added Wild. "We come here to fight for the Widow's Claim, and you can bet that no one is going to take it from her, not if every man in Phipp's Run has to be shot!"

The drunken gang simply stood and leaned about, their faces a picture of astonishment and dismay.

Not one of them dared to make a fight of it, it seemed.

The daring of Young Wild West and his party was something none of them could understand, and they simply played the part of a lot of whipped curs.

Seeing that he had them just where he wanted them, our hero stepped into the center of the room and said:

"You sneaking cowards, I want to tell you something. It is this: If any of you attempt to interfere with the Widow Palliser, or any of her friends, as long as they remain in this camp, you are going to die with your boots on! Do you hear what I say—die with your boots on! I hear that you have nicknamed yourselves the Gold Grabbers, but just make up your minds that you are not going to grab any of it, because I won't let you! Please bear that in mind!"

All the time he was talking Young Wild West held them covered with his revolvers.

He held one in each hand and he was ready to fill them with lead instantly.

And Cheyenne Charlie stood where he could have full swing at them.

The scout was just in the humor to fight, and it is safe to say that he was itching for them to resent the treatment they were receiving.

But they were not going to do just then.

The Finklestein brothers each had a handkerchief to his nose now, and their swarthy faces looked pale and ghastly in the uncertain light of the two bracket lamps in the store.

"I want to hear what you are going to do about this business," said Wild, when fully half a minute had elapsed without a word being spoken by any of the gang.

"You let us alone an' we'll let you alone!" blurted out Breakneck Bob.

"All right! Good evening, gentlemen!" and before they were hardly aware of it, Young Wild West and his partner had walked out of the place.

CHAPTER VI.

THE OPPOSITION STORE.

Wild and Cheyenne Charlie had not much more than got out of the store than Finklestein began jumping behind the counter like a wild man.

He got out of the barrel in short order, and gave vent to his feelings.

"Oh! Oh!" he cried. "What is the matter, anyhow? somebody send for Rachel to put some sticking salve on my nose. I believe I was lose about half of it, my friends!"

"No, you ain't," retorted Breakneck Bob. "It's only ther end what's took off of it, an' you kin spare a little, I reckon."

Some of the rascals plucked up sufficient courage to smile at this remark.

It had the effect of bringing them to their senses.

"Where is the salve, my brother," cried Sam Finklestein. "On the top shelf with the pins and needles," was the reply.

Sam's wound was nothing to speak of, and, as he had checked the flow of blood pretty well, he got upon a barrel and got the article needed.

Then he tore a couple of strips from a roll of muslin and proceeded to fix up his brother.

"It will be all right in a week," he said consolingly. "It will grow on, my brother."

A strange quietness had settled upon the villains now, and they all sat down on the benches and boxes that were provided for loungers.

"Well, boys, what do you think of Young Wild West?" asked Larry Liver.

"He's what I call a hurricane on wheels!" answered Breakneck Bob.

"We found out what he was over in Weston, didn't we, boys?"

"We did!" came in a chorus from the men Sam Finklestein had brought over to the camp.

"But we've got to down him, for all that," spoke up the storekeeper, speaking in a muffled tone, on account of the bandage that was over his nose and mouth.

"That's jest what we want to do," said Breakneck Bob. "You jest figure out a safe way to do it, an' I'll guarantee that we'll fix him."

"I'll think of a way before to-morrow night this time, my good friends. Just leave it to me. But from now until that time just let Young Wild West and his friends think they are having it all their own way. Those fellows are dead shots and they keep as cool as ice, no matter what the trouble is. That is why they get the best of everybody they tackle. But there is a way to overcome all this, and I'll guarantee to show you the way. Just let them think they have scared us off, my friends—that's the way to do it for the present."

The villains hung about the store until long toward midnight.

Then they left and went off to the various shanties and tents they occupied, taking with them the new arrivals in accordance with the accommodations they had.

Some of the rascally miners went to work the next morning, but a few of them gathered at the store and prepared to prolong the spree they had started on.

Of course, Tricky Tom and his gang hung around.

They had nothing to do but to make short work of the Widow Palliser when the opportunity came.

That was their business.

As has been stated, the general store run by Finklestein was the most pretentious of all the shanties at the camp.

It was also about the only place that could be called a store.

A miner named Beck, who belonged to the better element of the citizens of the place, dealt a little in picks and shovels, powder, cartridges and the like, taking pay in pelts for the same.

Finklestein had little use for Beck.

But he had not troubled him, since he knew that he did not take cash for the few sales he made.

If he had known that the miner had arranged to go into business on a larger scale, and that he had a supply of goods then on the way to the camp under the escort of ten determined men, who had started for Phipp's Run to try their luck at gold mining, he would surely have seen to it that Beck was put out of the way.

But he did not know it.

It was just about nine on the morning after Young Wild West's advent at the camp that the wagon train containing the goods Beck proposed to offer for sale arrived.

There were four big prairie schooners drawn by oxen, and the men escorting them were mounted on good horses.

Breakneck Bob happened to be standing in the doorway of the store when the wagon train hove into sight.

"Great Jupiter!" he cried. "What's this, Finkle? An emigrant train, as sure's you're born!"

The storekeeper, with his face bound up so that he looked as though he were wearing a white mask, hastened to the door.

"Good!" he exclaimed. "I shall take in more money now. More men are coming to work here. My prices will go up, my friends!"

But when he saw Beck go to meet the train and shake hands with the men in charge of it, he took on a different air.

"What does it mean, anyhow, Bob?" he asked.

"I don't know, Finkle. We'll have to wait an' see. First Young Wild West comes here to interfere with our game, an' now a gang of strangers comes along. It don't look as though we're gittin' ahead any towards gittin' ther claim from ther widder an' ther gold that she's got hid in her shanty."

"Never mind about that," spoke up Finklestein. "We must be careful what we say about that now. There are strangers here, and we must not let them know our business."

The wagons halted in front of the shanty occupied by Beck, which was less than two hundred feet distant and on

the opposite side of the street. All those in the store now came out and looked on with interest.

Almost the first thing they saw Beck do was to take a big sign from one of the prairie schooners and put it over the door of his shanty.

"General Supply Store," was the way the sign read.

What there was visible of Finklestein's face turned pale, then red.

"Opposition, I reckon," grunted the leader of the villainous gang of miners.

"There will be a big fire in the camp to-night!" exclaimed the storekeeper, as he turned and walked into the store.

But he came out again almost immediately.

Then in silence he stood watching the men as they unloaded the wagons and carried the goods into the shanty.

"I reckon we oughter have a drink on ther strength of that, hey, Finkle?" observed Breakneck Bob with a grin.

"Come in, everybody! I will stand a treat!" said the storekeeper. "I am much mad."

The men lost all interest in what was going on across the street.

They were thirsty, and some of them had little or no money left from the orgie of the night before.

They drank with Finklestein and swore to help him put the rival store out of business.

He was so enraged at the audacity of Beck that he treated them again.

"Wait till to-night!" he said. "When all the boys get here we will burn the new store to the ground, and while the excitement is going on, our friends will go and kill the widow and get her gold. Then they will take possession of her claim and we will help them hold it. That is the thing to do. This has shown me a way to do it. I am glad the wagon train came."

But he was not glad, though he said so.

However, he had conceived what he considered was a brilliant idea on account of it.

It took the men who had come there with the wagons some little time to get them unloaded, and just as they had done so, Finklestein came out of his store again.

Some of the new arrivals now started across the street.

They saw the sign of Finklestein's place indicating that whisky was sold there.

"You will start a row when they get inside, my friends," said the storekeeper in a whisper to his companions. "But when you commence to shoot, look out for my bottles of medicine on the shelves, and also the other glass in the store."

"All right, Finkle," retorted Breakneck Bob. "How about it, Tricky?"

"Sartain!" nodded Tricky Tom, the leader of the gang that had arrived the night before. "You kin count on us."

There were four of the new arrivals who came over to the store.

They were rough, honest-looking fellows and were well armed.

"I see you sell bug-juice here," observed one of them, as he entered the door in a careless fashion. "I reckon we've worked hard enough to have a drink or two. Jest put out ther pizen, landlord."

"All right, my friends," answered Finklestein, shooting a glance at his followers that meant that they were not to interfere while the strangers were spending their money.

He set out the bottle and the clumsy tumblers that were used in the primitive town and then waited for the man to put down the money.

But the four drank before the man who had ordered the round paid for it.

"Let's have some more," said one of the others. "Fill up your glasses, boys!"

"Hold on!" interposed the storekeeper, reaching for the bottle. "I must have the money for the first round before a second goes out. That's the way we do business in Phipp's Run, my friends."

"Oh!" exclaimed the man who had ordered the first round. "So that is the way you do business here, is it? Well, take the price of the round out of that!" and he threw a twenty-dollar gold piece on the counter.

"That was just right, my friend; thank you!" said Finklestein, scooping in the coin and pocketing it.

"What!" gasped the stranger. "Five dollars a drink?"

"That is what I charge to strangers."

"It is, hey?" and the man whipped out a big six-shooter. "Well, you just plunk down seventeen dollars and a half change, an' do it mighty quick! Hurry up, now! If you don't I'll shoot off ther rags you've got tied over your face."

The other three drew their shooters almost as soon as he did, and thus got ahead of the villainous gang.

"We didn't come in here to be robbed," said one of the strangers. "We are honest men, an' we want you to understand that!"

"An' if we've got to die with our boots on, we'd jest as leave do it now as any other time!" declared another.

Larry Liver, the big cowboy, who was considerable of a coward, happened to be the rascal furthest from the bar.

He took the risk of sending a shot at one of the men.

Crack!

As the report of his pistol sounded one of the newcomers threw up his hands and dropped.

It was a contemptible thing for him to do, but he had no scruples.

The very instant he fired, his courage left him and he started for the door.

He reached it just in time to run into the arms of Young Wild West.

Our hero had come down with Jim Dart to buy something that was needed over on the Widow's Claim, and he was just in time to take part in a row.

"Hold on!" cried the boy, as he saw the smoking revolver in the hand of the villain. "It was you who shot, was it? And you're running away, are you? Well, I guess you had better sit down a while."

Spat!

He struck the big coward a powerful blow between the eyes with his fist and down he went.

Just then two more shots sounded.

The mix-up in the store had started in earnest now.

Young Wild West quickly took in the situation.

He saw the strangers there, and he readily understood that the gang had set upon them to make short work of them.

"Hold on, there!" he shouted in a ringing voice.

The bad gang fell back instantly.

"I am satisfied that you fellows don't want to live very long," went on Wild, as he coolly walked up to the counter.

Then turning to the three strangers, he added:

"There's your man just getting up by the door. Go and take care of him!"

The men needed no second bidding.

They started forward just as Larry Liver made a leap through the doorway.

Crack! Crack! Crack!

Three reports sounded and the villain went down with his just deserts.

Wild and Jim were keeping the gang covered while this took place.

The gang was afraid of our hero, and that was all there was about it.

"I want ten pounds of nails, and I want them right away," said Wild, looking at the storekeeper.

CHAPTER VII.

THE SMART YOUNG HORSEMAN.

Young Wild West and Jim Dart had noticed the new store when they came over from the Widow's Claim.

But they thought it more advisable to go into the old store, since they wanted to show Finklestein and his gang how little they cared for them.

Being strangers in the camp, our friends did not know that the miner named Beck had been trading goods for pelts, and that he had now started a general store.

Wild had decided to erect a small log shanty on the claim, and while Charlie and Ford Palliser were cutting logs and getting them in position, he had come over to the store with Jim.

He wanted the shanty for a breastwork more than anything else, as he felt certain that the villains would become desperate after a while and make a combined attack.

He told Finklestein the size nails he wanted, and the man lost no time in weighing them out.

At the time of which we write nails in that part of the country were worth fifty cents a pound.

And they were a scarce article at that.

It took nearly all the storekeeper had on hand to fill Wild's order, but if he had wanted them all he would have got them.

Finklestein thought too much of what was left of his nose to refuse him.

Jim picked up the box of nails as our hero paid for them and walked out of the store.

Wild followed, keeping an eye on the villains as he did so. He knew they would be apt to take the least advantage and shoot him.

But there was not one of them who would risk taking a chance shot.

If they could have had the opportunity to draw bead on him it would have been different.

Wild went out and found Jim with the three men who had shot Larry Liver.

"We want to git our pard inside," said one. "I don't think he is dead."

"All right," answered our hero. "Go right inside and get him. I am afraid he is gone, though, for he lay very still on the floor when I saw him."

The rest of the men who had come in with the wagon train now came over, and with our hero at their head, they all filed in.

None of the inmates of the store said a word when the body of the miner was picked up and carried out.

As Wild had said, the man was dead.

When they saw that this was so, the men shook their heads and vowed vengeance on the gang.

"That is the headquarters of about the worst gang I have run across in a month," said Wild. "It seems to me that about every man who was in camp when we came here belongs to the gang."

"No," spoke up Beck, who happened along just then. "I never belonged to ther gang. There's a few more of us, too. But we didn't dare to go ag'in 'em, as they outnumbered us three or four to one. Now it will be different, I reckon. They made up their minds that they was goin' to git hold of ther Widow's Claim, but I hear that you fellers are puttin' up a fight to keep it fur her. They call themselves ther Gold Grabbers, an' their leader, which is really Finklestein, the storekeeper, is about ther greatest gold grabber I ever seen or heard tell of. He'd steal ther pennies off a dead man's eyes, he would."

"We will show them what kind of Gold Grabbers they are before we get through with them," said our hero, nodding to the men. "The Widow Palliser is going to keep her claim until she gets ready to sell it, and I guess if this opposition store opens up right it will do about all the business of the camp inside of three days. I mean business, and I am not going to fool away my time while I am in Phipp's Run."

"That's what I like to hear!" exclaimed one of the miners who had come in with the wagon train. "Say! Ain't you Young Wild West?"

"That is just what I happen to be."

"I thought so. I heard a little about you down in Cheyenne, an' it struck me right away who you was when I see you come in that store an' cow them scoundrels down like a lot of whipped dogs. Boys, take off your hats to Young Wild West! They call him ther Champion Deadshot of the West down in Cheyenne, an' I reckon he's jest ther whitest boy what ever grewed!"

"Hooray! Hooray!" yelled the men in unison.

Every one of them took off his hat and the cheering increased until Finklestein was seen at the door of his shanty listening.

Evidently he thought it boded no good to him.

Wild had quite a talk with Beck and his friends, and then he set out for the Widow's Claim with his partner.

When they got there they found that Charlie and Palliser had made great headway at cutting the logs.

The widow had insisted on helping them, and with their rifles in easy reach of them they had worked away like beavers.

"How did you make out?" asked Cheyenne Charlie. "You've got ther nails, I see."

"Yes, we got the nails, and we was just in time to stop a big ruction," retorted Jim Dart. "Two men went under, as it was, and one of them was the big cowboy called Larry Liver. He shot a stranger in the back, and then Wild knocked him down as he was running away, so the friends of the man he shot could get at him. They fixed him in short order."

"That's right," spoke up Wild. "There's another store started in the camp, too. A wagon train came in this morn'ing loaded with supplies, and a man named Beck has opened up a store in opposition to Finklestein. There is bound to be lively times here for a day or two now."

"I hope the Gold Grabbers will get the worst of it," said the widow, anxiously.

"I feel confident that they will," spoke up her brother-in-

law. "I have seen enough of Young Wild West and his partners to convince me on that point."

"Well, if I can only sell the claim for half what it is worth and get to some place with the bags of gold I have hidden in the cellar I will be satisfied. It was Dick's idea to sell out pretty soon, and then we were going to Wisconsin to live the remainder of our days."

"Well, since your husband did not live to carry out his purpose there is no reason why you should not do as he wanted to," observed Wild. "If I were you I would certainly go to Wisconsin after things got settled."

She shook her head sadly, but said nothing.

Our friends worked pretty hard that day, and when the sun went down they had formed a V-shaped barricade of logs with the ends lapped.

This was right against a rocky cliff, save at one side, which was to be used as a doorway to get in and out of it.

It was within a few feet of the widow's shanty, and it was large enough not only to accommodate our four friends, but their horses as well if it became necessary.

The roof was made of pine and cedar boughs interlaced with tough saplings, and though it would not keep out the rain altogether, it would serve the purpose of shielding them considerably.

After supper Wild concluded to take a walk around the camp and see how the new store was making out.

As both Charlie and Jim desired to accompany him, he told Palliser to remain at the shanty with the widow.

"Set the light on the table right in front of the window," he said, "and have it burning brightly. If anything goes wrong put out the light and we will be here in a jiffy."

"All right," answered the tenderfoot. "Don't forget to keep an eye this way, though."

"Oh, one of us will be looking this way pretty much all the time."

"Don't be afraid to shoot, Palliser, if you see any of them measly coyotes sneakin' around," said Charlie.

"You bet I won't!" was the reply. "I know what it is now, and I am not going to give them the chance to kill me any kind of fashion."

"I shan't hesitate to shoot, I can tell you that!" exclaimed the widow. "Those men murdered my husband, and I shall treat them the same as I would a lot of wolves if they attempt to come in this shanty!"

"That's it!" nodded our hero. "Come on, boys! I guess they can take care of things until we get back."

The three walked on down toward the center of the camp.

It was but a little ways, so there were no need of their taking their horses.

It seemed that every man in Phipp's Run was either hanging around the new store or the old one.

Wild counted about thirty in front of Finklestein's, and there was easily twenty at the place Beck had opened.

How many there were inside the shanties he did not know.

But as Finklestein or his brother were not to be seen, it was safe to say that there were quite a few inside.

Wild thought they had better stop at the new place and see what was going on.

One of the men who had come over with the wagons was a likely-looking young fellow, and he had his horse out in the street as though he was going to mount and ride away somewhere.

But as Wild, Charlie and Jim came to a halt they learned differently.

The young man was going to give an exhibition of horsemanship.

He got in the saddle and began riding up and down the street as though his life depended on seeing how fast he could go.

He was a very good rider and he was roundly applauded.

"I will now show you how we used to catch wild horses on the plains of Nebraska," he said, after he had performed several neat tricks in the saddle. "Just turn out a horse without a saddle or bridle."

A couple of his friends ran to do this, and everybody became interested.

"I reckon we're goin' to see somethin'," said Cheyenne Charlie, with a grin.

"I reckon we will," spoke up a man who chanced to overhear the remark. "Al Larkin is about the soonest feller with a horse that kin be found."

Wild nudged the scout for him to keep still.

He was satisfied to let the men enjoy themselves, and he did not want to get mixed up in the doings.

The horse was turned loose in the street, and when he was

ready, the young horseman gave the word for the men to start him off.

The horse did not feel like running much at first, but when Al Larkin, as they called him, swung his lariat and missed him, there was a change in the proceedings.

The riderless steed started up the street toward the open patch of ground that spread out for a mile beyond the camp.

And he got there, too, Larkin riding swiftly after him.

As it was dusk those in front of the store could not see what was going on.

"He'll come back with ther horse all right," said the man who had spoken to Charlie before.

"I don't doubt it," was the reply.

Ten minutes later there was a clatter of hoofs and the riderless horse appeared.

He dashed past the store like the wind, and then Larkin came riding up.

"I'll catch him yet!" he shouted.

Just then the now frightened animal turned and came galloping straight toward him.

The young man began swinging his lariat.

He had all the chance in the world, but when he let it go he missed.

He had thrown for the neck of the horse, and the animal had actually dodged it.

Two or three men uttered cries of derision.

This made Larkin mad.

"Is there any one in the crowd who kin do better?" he asked, looking around him with the air of a conqueror.

"Yes," spoke up the miner who had recognized our hero. "Young Wild West is here. He kin do a great deal better than you kin, Al!"

"Well, I don't believe it."

"I do, 'cause I've heard all about Young Wild West, an' I've seen enough to make me think that he's a tornado when he gits started at anything."

"Please leave me out of it, boys!" exclaimed our hero.

"No, we won't!" spoke Al Larkin. "If you kin do any better than I can, go ahead and do it. Here comes ther horse down ther road ag'in!"

The remark nettled Wild a trifle.

Near him one of the men stood with a lariat coiled.

He quickly took it from him, and hurriedly got it ready.

It was fast getting dark, but he could see well enough for the purpose he had in view.

The horse came galloping past, as though to tantalize the man who had been trying to catch him.

Whiz!

Young Wild West let the lariat go and caught the animal around the neck. He was nearly jerked from his feet, but he slackened the pace of the horse, and then, running forward like a deer, he sprang upon its back.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE LIGHT IN THE WINDOW.

A shout of applause went up from the crowd of men when Wild landed on the back of the horse.

The animal was without either saddle or bridle, but he was going to ride him.

The frightened steed made a bolt and dashed down the single street of the camp like a shot.

Our hero coolly gathered in the trailing lariat, coiling it as though he was only doing a very commonplace thing.

The noose was still about the neck of the animal, and when he had the coil all made he shook out a loop, and, with a deft movement, swung it around in front of the mouth of the horse.

The mouth being open at the time, all that was required was a quick jerk and he had the horse where he wanted him.

"Whoa, boy!" Wild called out. "Whoa, now! Take it easy, old fellow."

The speed was slackened instantly, and the next minute he turned around and came back toward the newly-opened store on a sharp canter.

"Whoa, there!" cried the dashing young deadshot, as he pulled up and halted right at the edge of the crowd. "How are you, gentlemen? Here is your horse!"

He dismounted and held the animal by the head until one of the men recovered from his surprise sufficiently to come and put a halter on the captured steed.

"Hooray for Young Wild West!" yelled the miner who

had told Al Larkin that Wild could beat him. "Now, boys, give it out good and strong!"

The men needed no urging.

They fairly made the welkin ring with their cheers.

Wild simply took off his hat and smiled.

"That was not such a great thing to do," he said. "All that was required was a little quickness, and I always have some of that with me."

"I reckon you do," spoke up Beck. "There ain't many like you, though. Larkin, now you know whether you kin beat at lassoin' a hoss, or not."

"Well, I might have done the same thing if I had tried," was the retort. "He was standin' on ther ground, you know, an' he had a good chance to swing ther lariat jest as he wanted to."

"No, he didn't!" cried the man our hero had taken the lariat from. "He didn't have no chance at all. He jest grabbed it from my hands an' let it go. It was ther slick-est thing I ever seen done, an' I don't care who gets mad when I say so."

"Don't git sassy about it, Bulger, or I'll twist your nose fur yer!" exclaimed Larkin.

"No, you won't!" was the quick answer. "It don't lay in your boots fur you to do it!"

"It don't, hey?"

The young man was angry because Wild had beaten him at throwing the lasso, and when the miner called Bulger began to taunt him he flew into a rage.

He was a powerful looking young fellow, and he really looked as though he might be able to make good his threat.

But Wild did not mean that he should.

He stepped between them and said:

"Hold on, gents! There is no need of fighting over this. Just take it easy now."

Ignoring him entirely, Larkin struck a blow over his shoulder and landed lightly on Bulger's forehead.

Bulger leaped around Wild and let a savage swing go at the young miner.

"Stop!" cried Wild. "There is going to be no fight, do you hear that?"

He caught the young man by the throat before the words were fairly out of his mouth and pushed him back, at the same time giving the older man a push that sent him staggering back.

"Ain't goin' to be any fight!" echoed Larkin. "I reckon you'll——"

"Never mind what I'll do," retorted Wild coolly. "If you don't look out I'll hurt you. Now, just behave yourself. I am not going to allow a fight to take place just on my account."

"I reckon you can't stop it now, Young Wild West!" cried Bulger. "Git away from him, or you may git hit by mistake."

Our hero did not do as he was told.

On the contrary, he slid his hand around until he got a grip on the shirt collar of Larkin.

Then he caught Bulger with the other hand in the same manner.

Young Wild West possessed an awful grip.

And he was as strong as a young lion.

He jerked the two men apart and then brought them together with all the power he could command.

Their heads struck together with a thud that could be heard way over to Finklestein's store.

Again he pulled them apart, and again he brought them together.

Then he let go of them and both dropped to the ground, partially stunned from the force of the contact.

A hoarse murmur of surprise went up from those in the crowd.

"They wanted to fight so badly that I thought it best to give them enough of it," said our hero quietly. "I guess the fight is all out of them now."

"I reckon it is," observed Beck. "Come in, everybody! My man has just tapped a barrel of moonshine that's fit fur ther President to drink himself! Come on, everybody! I'm here to stay, an' I'm goin' to use folks right."

A rousing cheer followed the invitation and then the men began pushing their way into the little shanty.

Wild assisted Larkin to get upon his feet and the miner who had warned the young man at the start performed a like service for Bulger.

"A little whisky will do me good, I calculate," said the latter.

"Me, too!" exclaimed Larkin.

They showed not the least sign of anger now.

Wild and his partners saw that there was not room for all hands in the little place, so they did not make a move to go inside.

"Hey, there!" cried Beck when he missed them. "Come on in. Young Wild West, you an' your pards! There's got to be room fur you fellers here, if somebody else has to git out!"

"Go ahead and give the men their drinks," answered our hero. "We will come in as soon as the place gets cleared a little. Beck, you have got to build on your shanty."

"I know it. I'm goin' to start in at it to-morrer. Hey, there, behind ther bar. Git a move on yer an' send them what's had their rations outside, so's Young Wild West kin git in."

The next minute half a dozen came out and then our three friends went in.

"I don't drink anything strong myself," observed the dashing young deadshot, so there is little use in my coming in. However, I want to have a look at your store."

"Well, if you don't drink, mebbe you smoke," said Beck.

"Yes, I do smoke a cigar occasionally."

"Good enough! Putty work, I say! I've got some as fine cigars as was ever drawed. They've all got ther government stamp on 'em, which is more than I kin say about ther whisky. But that ain't no fault of mine. I bought it through a friend of mine in Yankton, an' it has got to go!"

Wild and Jim each took one of the cigars and Charlie tried a little of the moonshine, just for his stomach's sake, he said.

Then it was that Beck began to do a rushing business.

Now that he had somebody to back him, the miner felt that Finklestein did not amount to so very much, after all.

"Ther gang of Gold Grabbers kin go to thunder!" he observed. "This is a free country, anyhow, an' one man's got ther same right as another."

"That's right," nodded our hero. "But in a good many places might makes right, it seems."

Pretty soon the men got to singing and whooping.

Things were going about the same way across the street, and Wild saw that there was bound to be a conflict between the two crowds before morning.

If this should come to pass the Gold Grabbers would be apt to have it pretty much their own way, since they greatly outnumbered Beck's following.

"See here, boys," he said, mounting a stool, "you had better go it a little easy. If you all get drunk those fellows over on the other side will have an easy thing of it if they tackle you. A man can do better fighting with a clear head than he can with one that is muddled with whisky."

"That's right, even if I do hurt my trade when I say it!" declared Beck. "Boys, Young Wild West knows jest what he's talkin' about, an' don't you forget it!"

Wild called him aside.

"If you know when you're well off, you won't sell any more of the stuff to-night. You can do as you like, but I am speaking for your own good. You can bet all you're worth that the Gold Grabbers across the street will come over here and start a muss before the night has passed."

"All right. I'll do just as you say."

He went inside and told the man dealing out the drinks to stop, and when he did there was very little objection on the part of the men.

They seemed to realize that it was for their good, so they gave in to superior judgment.

Wild and his partners took seats on some boxes that were outside.

They could see the light in the window of the widow's shanty plainly from here.

At least one of them had been watching it ever since they left to come to the heart of the camp.

Larkin and Bulger had managed to drink more whisky than any of the rest, it seemed.

They were the only ones in the crowd who could be called drunk.

They had been talking together while the drinking was going on, and they had come to the conclusion that Young Wild West was no good.

Others had come to the same conclusion before, and to their sorrow.

The more they talked of what had happened to them the more they thought that the boy ought to be thrashed.

Just as Beck gave it out that no more liquor would be disposed of at his establishment, they decided to give Wild a thrashing by doing it jointly.

They were quite well satisfied that neither of them could do it alone.

Our friends had not been seated on the boxes more than five minutes when the two came out and approached them.

"We'd like to see you a minute in private, Young Wild West," said Bulger.

"All right," replied our hero, who thought at once that they were up to some sort of trick.

He got up and followed them around the corner of the shanty.

They had no sooner got there when both men struck at him at the same time.

But Wild was on his guard and managed to dodge both blows.

"So that is what you wanted to see me for, is it?" he asked in an ordinary tone of voice. "Well, all right. Take that, Bulger! And you, Larkin, take that!"

He struck out with his right and left, and the men, being drunk, failed to dodge him.

Both went down.

But the boy did not stop at this.

He felt that nothing short of a sound thrashing would satisfy the men, and he was just in the humor to give it to them.

They had tried to take him unawares, and he was not the sort to look over anything like that.

Spat! Spat!

He hit them in their faces every time and soon they were howling for mercy.

Several men came around.

Cheyenne Charlie was among them, leaving Jim to watch the light in the window.

"What's ther trouble, Wild?" the scout asked.

"Oh! These two fellows called me around here to give me a thrashing, that's all," was the reply. "I am now trimming them up, so they will remember me as long as they live."

One of the miners hastily got a lantern and held it so he could see the two who were getting punished.

"It's Bulger an' Larkin!" he cried. "Give it to 'em, Young Wild West!"

And Wild did give it to them.

He did not desist until he had closed their eyes and had the blood running from their noses in streams.

Neither of them made a move to draw a weapon, and it was lucky for them that they did not.

"There!" he exclaimed, rising to his feet. "I guess they have got all they want. But it wasn't Bulger and Larkin who tried to whip me; it was the whisky. If they had let the stuff alone they wouldn't have tried such a cowardly game. I'll forgive them this time, but let them look out for the next!"

Just then Jim Dart came running around the corner of the shanty.

"The light is out, Wild!" he cried.

CHAPTER IX.

THE FOUL SCHEME OF THE FINKLESTEINS.

The Finklestein brothers had been watching what was taking place across the street with anything but pleasant feelings toward Beck and his friends.

"That place has got to be burned down before morning, my brother!" he exclaimed in a hoarse whisper.

"That's right," answered Sam. "And we can do more than that, too, if we try hard."

"Do more than that?"

"Yes, we can get the widow's gold at the same time."

"Tell me how, my brother. My brain has been muddled since I lost the end of my nose."

"Well, I will tell you how. In the first place, we must send three or four of the men I brought over away. Find some errand to send the men so they won't get back before morning. Then some of the rest can sneak up to the widow's shanty and get the gold. There is only one man up there, as Young Wild West and his two partners are across the street. That man and the widow must die, if needs be—they must, anyhow. While the gang is over at the widow's shanty we will fire the shanty across the street. That will keep Young Wild West here, and when they go back to the Widow's Claim our friends who are there can shoot them down. Then it will soon be discovered that four of the gang

that came over here are missing. The miners will lay the slaughter and robbery to them, and they will start out to hunt them up. If they catch them and kill them it will be nothing to us, for we will then have both the widow's gold and the claim."

"Spoken like a good brother!" exclaimed the storekeeper, taking Sam about the neck and embracing him. "You have a great head, Sam—a great head! Oh! How can I ever thank you for making such a suggestion! I can see it all now. It is very easy. It shall be done, and right away, at that."

They talked it over for a few minutes and then had the plot fixed to suit them.

Then they each treated the crowd in turn and started in to carry out the foul scheme.

Sam picked out four of the men, whom he considered to be of the least use in a fight and told them he wanted them to go over to a camp that was forty miles away and have a barrel of whisky brought over that was there awaiting an order from his brother.

He gave them some money to spend in the saloon he told them they would find there, and they readily agreed to take the trip.

There was no camp there at all, but the four villains did not know it.

They were to be sacrificed in order to carry out the scheme of the Gold Grabbers, and they fell into it readily.

They were sent off at once from the rear of the store, so they would not be observed taking their departure by the men across the street.

Meanwhile the storekeeper had been busily talking to three of the men he thought he could depend upon.

They were Tricky Tom, Breakneck Bob and another fellow who was ever ready to do Finklestein's bidding.

He had selected them to go over to the shanty of the widow and get the gold that was supposed to be hidden somewhere in it.

"If you can't find it, make her tell you where it is before you put an end to her," he said.

"All right," answered Tricky Tom. "But how are we to git in ther shanty?"

"You will have to find a way when you get there."

"We'll do that all right," said Breakneck Bob. "We won't be afraid, 'cause it's only a tenderfoot what's there with her. I was opposed to havin' anything to do with ther killin' of ther widow, but now that things has come to such a pass, it's got to be done, an' I'm jest ther one as will do it!"

While the rest of the gang was singing and having a high old time, the three selected men left the place from the rear and headed for the Widow's Claim.

Sam had decided to be the one to set the rival store on fire.

So, giving the three villains time to get to the Widow's Claim, he stole out and made a circular route for the rear of the store of Beck.

He had a demijohn of kerosene oil with him and a bunch of shavings under his coat.

Sam Finklestein meant business.

He got around behind the shanty just at the finish of the fight between Young Wild West and the two men who called him around the corner to thrash him.

Sam heard and saw some of it.

He gave a nod of satisfaction and then muttered:

"Couldn't have happened better. Now, I guess I had better get things ready, so I can light it whenever I feel like it."

There was a small shed erected in the rear of the shanty, which was used for washing and other household purposes.

There was more or less rubbish here, too, and right near it were a few boxes that had contained some of the goods that had been brought over on the wagon train.

Sam carefully piled them close against the boards of the shanty, right under the shed, and then he poured the demijohn of oil on them.

"I guess I had better light up while I've got the chance," he thought.

Producing a match from his pocket, the villain struck it and calmly lighted a cigar.

Then he reached down and touched the flame to the inflammable pile.

It blazed up instantly and Sam Finklestein lost no time in getting away from the spot.

He hastened around by the way he had come and reached the store before the fire was discovered.

"There was some trouble, Sam," said his brother. "Young Wild West and his partners have run away from over there

and some more men went with him. They went right straight for the Widow's Claim, too."

"What!" cried Sam.

"That was right. They must have found out that we sent some men up there to rob the widow."

"How could they find that out?"

The storekeeper shrugged his shoulders.

"Don't ask me," he said. "It is a hard question. But what made them leave so suddenly? They didn't walk, either; they went on a run."

"Well, the fire will bring them back, maybe. Ah! There it goes! Now you will see a fine blaze, and it will be the last of the new store!"

Sure enough, the shanty was now blazing away at a great rate.

A dense column of black smoke was rising in the air and the glare of the flames illumined the scene in the rear of the shanty.

"Great Moses!" cried the storekeeper. "But that is fine, my brother!"

"I should say it was!" retorted Sam.

None of the gang of Gold Grabbers who were hanging about the store had been aware that the shanty was to be burned so soon.

The villains expected that it might be before morning but they were astonished when they saw it in flames so early in the evening.

"Ther new store is on fire!" cried one of them, rushing in to where the two Finklesteins were standing.

"What!" they cried in a breath. "You don't mean it!"

"She's on fire all right, an' I reckon that they've got to go too far fur water to put it out. Jingo! Ain't it a-blazin'!"

It was, sure enough.

The shanty was but a frail structure at the best, and the whole rear portion of it was now in a blaze.

Some of Beck's friends were endeavoring to extinguish the fire and others were carrying out the supplies.

The latter were certainly doing the most good for the building was doomed.

Those in Finklestein's place now rushed out into the street.

But they did not go across to lend a hand.

On the contrary, they began to laugh and jeer.

"It was funny that it should catch first, wasn't it?" cried Finklestein. "That goes to show that there should be but one general supply store in Phipp's Run. The fates are certainly kind to me, boys! We will have another drink."

The men readily suspected that he knew all about the fire, but they could not quite understand how it had been started.

They took their whisky and drank to the success of the blaze, and the storekeeper chuckled.

But let us see how the three who had been sent to the widow's shanty made out.

Before starting they provided themselves with clubs in addition to their regular weapons.

Then they hastened through the darkness to the claim.

The fact that Young Wild West and his two partners were not there gave them courage to proceed.

They were not afraid to tackle the tenderfoot and the widow.

They got close to the cliff that ran along the back line of the claim and soon were within a few feet of the house.

The villains saw the lamp in the window and wondered why it was there in such prominence.

But they did not stop to figure on the matter.

They went around to the door of the shanty.

Luck was with them, it seemed, for just at that moment the door opened and Ford Palliser stepped out.

"I left my rifle in the log place we built to-day," they heard him say. "I will get it and be right back. There is no telling how soon we may have to use it."

The men nudged each other.

Tricky Tom assumed the leadership.

As Palliser reached the triangular log house he was right behind him.

Up went the club he had in his hand and down it came with crushing force on the head of the tenderfoot.

Palliser dropped like a log.

"Tie him up. He might not be dead," said Tricky Tom in a whisper. "Gag him, too. If he gits over that crack he's a good one, but you can't tell about sich things."

The unfortunate man was soon bound and gagged, though it did not seem as though it was necessary.

Leaving him right where he had fallen, the three villains made for the door of the shanty.

It was ajar so there was no trouble for them to get in.

Tricky Tom pushed the door open and sprang inside, followed by his companions.

The widow uttered a shriek of alarm when she saw the men, and blew out the light.

The Gold Grabbers thought this was done to disconcert them, but they had marked the spot where the young woman stood well in their minds, and they leaped forward and succeeded in catching her.

"Light ther lamp, Bob," said the leader of the trio. "We've got to see what we're doin'."

Breakneck Bob obeyed.

"Hold on tight to her," Tricky Tom remarked to the other fellow.

"Now, then, you jest tell us where ther gold is," he said to the trembling widow.

"I won't!" she retorted defiantly. "You can kill me if you like, but I will never tell you where the gold is that my husband left."

But unthinkingly she cast a glance at a trap door in the floor as she spoke.

The eyes of the men followed the glance.

Breakneck Bob understood immediately.

The gold was in the cellar.

"I reckon it's all right. You hold her, so she can't git loose, an' we'll open ther trap door an' go below."

"Lock ther door first. You can't tell what might happen," advised Tricky Tom.

This was done.

The cowboy villain could hold the woman easily, and he did so, while his two companions pried open the trap door.

Then one of them found a lantern and lighted it.

"Now fur ther gold!" he exclaimed.

Down they went, and in less than two minutes an exultant cry came from below.

"Have you found it?" called out Tricky Tom.

"Yes!" came the reply.

A scream of dismay left the lips of the widow.

"Shut up! I'll knock your brains out if you yell again!" cried the scoundrel who was holding her.

Five minutes passed and then one of the men came up through the opening and placed two bags on the floor.

Then he went down and the other came up with two more.

He came out into the room and placed the bags on the floor.

"Don't take it! Don't!" pleaded the poor little woman in black, as she sank upon her knees. "It does not belong to you, and you know it. Leave it be and go away!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed Tricky Tom, as he raised the club over the head of the woman. "Have you got it all, boys?"

"Yes," answered the fellow below, as he lifted his head above the edge of the floor.

"Then the widder has got to die!"

The young woman covered her face with her hands as the murderous scoundrel nerved himself to strike the blow that would put an end to her.

CHAPTER X.

THE FIRST ATTEMPT OF THE GOLD GRABBERS IS FOILED.

Young Wild West and his two partners started for the Widow's Claim without loss of time.

Three or four of the men followed them, for they realized that something was wrong over there and that their services might be needed.

"What's ther matter?" asked one of them.

"We told our friend and the widow to put out the light if any one came to interfere with them," answered Jim.

"Well, there must be some of ther Gold Grabbers there, then. Ah! Ther light is lit again!"

"That is so!" and Wild came to a stop.

"Maybe it went out accidentally," said Jim.

"I don't believe it," spoke up Charlie. "Let's go up there an' see, anyhow."

"That's right," said our hero. "Come on!"

Just then a shout went up from behind them.

"Beck's place is afire!" cried one of the miners.

Wild and his partners turned and saw that such was the case.

For a moment they forgot all about the light in the window.

"Somebody has done that!" exclaimed the scout. "I'll bet Finklestein across ther way is responsible for it."

"I wouldn't be surprised," nodded Wild. "But come on! There are enough there to save Beck's goods, even if they can't save the shanty. There is something wrong over at the widow's, I am certain. The light went out, and it remained out for nearly a minute. There is something wrong there."

They paused perhaps a minute and saw that the miners were carrying out the things the shanty contained, and then they continued on their way, the men who had started with them following.

By this time the shanty was blazing away in full blast, lighting up the surrounding country with a dull, red glare.

"Beck's shanty is gone, I reckon," observed one of the miners, who had come over with the wagon train.

"But they'll save their goods, most likely," spoke up another. "This is what I call too bad."

"Easy!" cautioned Wild. "Don't talk too loud."

At that instant the cry of a female in distress was heard.

It came from the shanty, and our hero bounded forward like a shot.

He reached the window and peered in.

He saw the woman in the clutch of a brawny man and then his eyes turned to the open trap door, through which another man was emerging.

Beckoning to the others, he ran around to the door.

He tried it softly, thinking it might open.

But it was locked.

Then he stepped back for the purpose of smashing in the door.

Cheyenne Charlie, Jim Dart and the rest reached the spot at that moment.

"Now, boys, follow me!"

The Gold Grabbers had been caught in the very act.

They were taken completely by surprise, too.

"Hands up, you measly coyotes!" exclaimed Cheyenne Charlie, forcing his way past Wild and confronting Break-neck Bob, who stood with a bag of gold in either hand.

Jim Dart rushed at the other villain, who was just emerging from the trap door.

Clink! Clink!

The bags dropped on the floor and up went the hands of the man Charlie was after.

Dart grabbed the other fellow by the collar and gave a yank that brought him out upon the floor.

Wild had caught Tricky Tom by the throat, and, forcing his head back, he struck him a blow in the face with the butt of his revolver.

Down he went, and with a cry of joy the widow sprang to her feet.

"I am so glad you got here in time!" she cried. "Oh! Oh! They were going to kill me!"

The miners who had followed our friends to the shanty now set upon the three men and in less than two minutes they were securely bound.

"Now, we'll go back to their fire, boys!" said one of them.

"Come on!"

"That's right!" exclaimed Young Wild West. "We will attend later to things here."

Out they went, speeding as fast as they could run for the scene of the conflagration.

Our hero was just as cool as though nothing had occurred.

"Calm yourself, Mrs. Palliser," he remarked. "They came near getting your gold, but they didn't do it. So just take it easy."

"Where is Ford?" she cried suddenly. "I fear they have killed him!"

"That's so!" exclaimed our hero, who had forgotten all about the tenderfoot. "Where was he when you last saw him, Mrs. Palliser?"

"He went out to the log hut to get his rifle, which he left there, and while he was gone the three villains opened the door and sprang upon me. I managed to blow out the light before they caught me, but they lighted it again."

"I see. They probably fell upon your brother-in-law when he went out. I hope they did not kill him, and if they did I'll guarantee they will never get away from the claim alive!"

Wild left the shanty, revolver in hand, and made for the log structure they had built that day.

Before he reached it he stumbled over the form of Palliser.

Stepping, he felt for the man's heart and found it beating.

Then he picked up the man bodily in his strong arms and carried him into the shanty.

The blow the tenderfoot had received was not a dangerous one after all.

It had been a glancing one.

Jim quickly tore the gag from his mouth and severed the rope that bound him.

"Oh!" gasped Palliser.

"All right!" said Wild, smiling. "I guess you are a good ways from being dead yet."

"I'm all right, but my head aches," was the reply.

The widow hastily procured a rag and some water and then proceeded to bathe his head.

There was quite a bad cut, but it was not deep.

"You will be all right in the morning," said our hero, as he examined it and assisted in dressing the wound. "Charlie, you and Jim just take a walk outside and see if there are any more of the Gold Grabbers around. Their first attempt to get the property away from the widow has failed, but there may be some of them out there, who will become just desperate enough to make an attack on us."

The two promptly went outside.

Five minutes later Jim Dart came back.

"There isn't a soul to be seen," he declared. "The shanty of Beck is pretty well burned down now, and there is some shooting going on down there."

"Ah!" exclaimed Wild. "The rest of the Gold Grabbers have attacked them, then. Well, I suppose we had better go there and help them."

Widow Palliser cast a startled glance at him as he said this.

"You are not going to leave us here, are you?" she said.

"Suppose more of the villains should come here?"

"Well, Jim can stay here with you. Charlie and I will go," he answered.

"All right," remarked Jim. "I guess we can take care of things here all right."

As soon as Wild and Charlie had gone Jim asked the widow for a heavy cloth to cover the window.

She got something for him that would answer the purpose.

"Now, blow out the light!" he said.

She did so.

Then he put the cloth over the window and fastened it so no light could be seen from the outside.

A faint light came from the open trap, and when he saw it Jim gave a nod.

"Ah!" he exclaimed. "There is a lighted lantern below. That will be enough for us."

Handing his rifle to Palliser, he told him to sit close to the doorway and keep a watch.

Mrs. Palliser got her rifle and went there with him.

Then Dart went down into the cellar, taking two of the bags with him.

They were so heavy with gold that he could not have taken any more than that number at one time.

He had just gone down when the widow and Palliser heard approaching footsteps from the outside.

They gripped their rifles tightly and got ready to shoot.

The next minute Young Wild West and Cheyenne Charlie appeared.

"What's the trouble?" asked Wild.

"Oh! Is it you?" cried the widow. "There is nothing the matter."

"We thought there might be. The light went out so suddenly that we thought there might be some of the Gold Grabbers here to finish what the three villains started to do. That was the signal agreed upon before and we thought you might be working it again."

"I never thought of that," said Jim, as he came up from the cellar. "I thought it would be a good idea to cover the window, so the friends of the three would think that they had accomplished their purpose and left the shanty."

"That is a good idea. Well, we understand it now, so we will go on down to the fire."

"If anything goes wrong, and we want you back in a jiffy, we will tear down the curtain, so the light will show in the window," said Jim.

"All right."

Once more our hero and the scout left the shanty.

"Now," said Jim, turning to Palliser and the widow, "you two just keep a sharp watch and I will get the gold down in the cellar and close the trap-door so it won't be opened so readily again."

"Very well," answered the tenderfoot.

Dart soon did as he said he would.

When he was ready he closed the trap-door, and noticing hasp and staple, asked the widow if she had a lock for it.

"Yes," she answered. "It is on the shelf. I don't see how

I came to leave it unlocked. The arrival of you all made me quite forget it, I suppose."

Jim locked the door and set the lantern on the floor near the three helpless villains.

"How do you fellows feel?" he asked, looking at them.

"Not very good," answered Breakneck Bob.

Tricky Tom was unconscious from the blow Wild had given him, but the other man quickly said:

"Let us go, won't yer?"

"I hardly think so," retorted Jim.

"It will be better fur yer if you do," spoke up Breakneck Bob.

"I don't think it will be any better to let you go. There will be three more of the Gold Grabbers to fight if you should get away. You are all right as you are. Just imagine you can see yourselves being hung to the big tree 'outside and perhaps you'll feel a little easier."

The two men writhed and twisted when this remark reached their ears.

"If you let us go we'll do anything you say," he pleaded.

"You mean that you would kill us the first chance you got," retorted Jim.

"No! If you let us go we'll light out fur some other place, without even goin' back to Finklestein's store."

"If I was sure you would keep your word I would not let you go."

"Oh! Yes you would. You think we're lyin', when we ain't," spoke up the other.

"It makes no difference to me whether you are lying or not. There is not enough gold in Phipp's Run to hire me to let you fellows go."

"Tricky Tom is dead, so you ought to be satisfied," ventured Bob, after a pause.

"If he is dead, so much the better. That's what you fellows will be inside of twelve hours."

They remained silent after this.

Half an hour slipped by.

By listening keenly Jim could hear shots being fired now and then.

Suddenly he noticed that the sounds were growing plainer. He went outside.

Then he suddenly realized that a number of men were coming toward the shanty, firing as they did so.

"The Gold Grabbers are chasing them here," he muttered. "I guess we had better get the gold out of the cellar and put it behind the barricade we made."

CHAPTER XI.

WHAT JIM FOUND.

Jim Dart quickly ran into the shanty.

"The Gold Grabbers are getting the best of the fight, and our friends are retreating here!" he exclaimed.

"What!" cried Ford Palliser, springing to his feet and forgetting all about his sore head for the time.

"That is the only thing I can make of it," Jim declared.

"Now, Mrs. Palliser, I would like to give you a little advice."

"What is it?" the widow asked, in a trembling voice.

"It is that you move out of here with all that you can take with you in a hurry. Behind the log pile would be a safer place for both you and your gold."

"All right!" she answered. "Just as you say, Mr. Dart. I will help you get the bags of dust and nuggets out."

Jim quickly unlocked the trap-door.

The sounds of the shooting were getting closer all the time, and he knew he must act with quickness.

Leaving Palliser on guard at the door, he seized the lantern and went down into the cellar, followed by the widow.

Then they quickly got the bags and took them up.

There were five of them, and they contained a very neat sum.

"Get these over behind the log barricade!" Jim exclaimed. "Pick up two of them, Palliser."

The tenderfoot did so.

Dart took two more and the widow the remaining one.

They would not have liked it if they had been forced to carry them very far, but they did not think about the weight just then.

When they had deposited the treasure safely behind the log fortification they went back after the things the women desired most to save.

They were taking them out when Beck and several miners came up.

"Halt!" cried Jim, who could not distinguish them in the darkness. "What do you want here?"

"We are friends!" answered Beck. "Don't shoot. Ther Gold Grabbers are after us, an' they outnumber us two to one. We thought ther Widder's Claim would be ther safest place fur us, so we come here, firin' at ther gang as we come. Where's Young Wild West?"

Dart gave a start.

"Don't you know where he is?" he asked. "Wasn't he down there with you?"

"No. We ain't seen him since jest afore ther fire started. Here's ther fellers what come up here with him. It was them as what said it would be ther best thing fur us to come here when ther flyin' lead got too thick fur us."

"Come on! You're welcome!" exclaimed Dart, when he recognized the miners.

But he was worried over the disappearance of Wild.

"Didn't you see anything of Cheyenne Charlie, either?" he questioned.

"No, not since we left you here," answered one of the men who had helped bind the three prisoners in the shanty.

There were only about a dozen of the men, showing that some of them must have fallen in the fight.

Jim saw that they all could not get behind the log barricade, so he advised them to draw up alongside the shanty and make a stand there.

"We will pick them off from behind the logs as they come," he said. "How many is there of them, anyhow?"

"Nigh about thirty of 'em, I reckon," retorted Beck, who was very much dejected over the events of the night.

"They attacked you, did they?"

"Yes, an' they're follerin' us up here."

"Well, I have an idea that they will not come very close for a while. Ah!"

A volley was fired just then, and the bullets whistled through the air over their heads.

"Don't!" cried Jim, as the miners were about to answer the shots. "Don't shoot until you are sure you are going to hit something. That's the doctrine that Young Wild West teaches, and it can't be beat, either."

"I reckon you're right, my boy," spoke up the man who had recognized our hero down at the new store. "Jest fall back here, boys, an' wait till Young Wild West's partner tells you what to do."

The men who had come over with the wagons had rifles, but the others did not.

However, there were enough of them to keep the Gold Grabbers away for a long time, if they only worked things right, and Jim was not much alarmed about that part of it.

He could not imagine what had become of Wild and Charlie.

But he saw that there was going to be a sharp fight now, and got ready for it.

The widow and Palliser were already behind the logs.

"Three of you who can shoot straight with rifles come here," he called out.

Three of the men came forward.

"Get behind here," he remarked, pointing to the barricade. "The rest of you hug this side of the shanty, and if the villains come close enough open fire on them, and shoot to kill!"

The men gave a cheer.

All they needed was a leader, and in the absence of Wild Jim felt it his duty to act as one.

Crac-c-c-k!

The Gold Grabbers were firing heavily now.

The most of the shots were directed at the shanty, it seemed, and the building was being riddled.

Suddenly Jim thought about displaying the light.

He knew that Wild and Charlie would hear the firing if they were anywhere around and able to get there, but he concluded that he ought to give the signal, anyhow.

Telling all hands to remain right where they were, he darted for the door of the shanty.

When he reached it he dropped upon his hands and knees and crept in.

The lantern was still on the floor and burning brightly.

He seized it and placed it on the table.

Then one sharp pull brought the piece of cloth down, and the light from the lantern streamed from the window.

Back to the logs went the daring boy, the bullets whistling all around him.

The Gold Grabbers were getting slowly nearer, as could be told by the shots fired.

Presently Jim caught a glimpse of their moving figures. Raising his rifle to his shoulder, he took aim and fired. He had the satisfaction of seeing one of them drop, for the stars gave light enough for that, and then he yelled out: "If you see them, fire!"

The three he had invited to the cover of the logs immediately responded.

Then a volley was fired by the men crouching at the side of the shanty.

The effect was all that could be desired.

The Gold Grabbers fell back instantly and ceased firing.

Beck was so elated that he began cheering wildly, and the others joined in.

"Don't holler afore you are out of ther woods," said one.

"That's right," called out Jim. "It ain't over yet, not by any means."

For the next five minutes silence reigned.

It seemed as though the villains had given up the fight, for the present, anyhow.

Jim resolved to take a scout around and see what they were up to, if he could.

Telling his companions to remain right where they were and not do any more shooting until they heard from him, he started out.

As the reader knows, Jim Dart was a very apt pupil of Young Wild West.

And his great experience gave him a great advantage at that kind of work.

He crept softly away through the darkness, taking a circular course.

Soon he was a hundred yards from the besieged spot.

Then he paused for the space of half a minute and listened.

He could hear the low hum of voices not a great distance away.

Cautiously the boy began crawling in that direction.

He was not alarmed about being caught by the Gold Grabbers, for, from what he had seen of them they were greatly lacking in craftiness.

He gradually drew near to the men, who were talking in low tones.

In another minute he was close enough to hear what was being said.

About twenty men were crouching in a little hollow.

"It won't do to run right at 'em," he heard one of them say. "They would mow us down like wheat if we done that."

"Yes," answered one. "I think ther best thing we kin do is to go an' see Finkle. He knows what oughter be done, I reckon."

"That would be a good idea. S'pose you go an' tell him just how things are? It ain't likely that Young Wild West an' his crowd will come out here to fight us, not in ther dark, anyhow."

Dart gave a start when he heard the last of the remarks.

The villains thought that Wild was at the shanty.

That seemed queer.

But it showed that they had not captured or shot him.

A sudden resolve came in the boy's head.

"I'll follow that fellow when he goes to tell Finkle," he muttered. "I will be safe in doing it, for they will not move from here until they receive word what to do."

The next minute he heard the man move off, and he softly crept away in the same direction.

When at a safe distance he got upon his feet and then he could dimly see the villain a trifle more than a hundred feet ahead of him.

He was making a straight line for the store.

Jim dodged along behind him, keeping under cover of the trees as much as possible.

In a short time the Gold Grabber reached the store.

As he entered it Jim crept around and saw that there were only two men in it.

They were the Finklestein brothers.

The rascals had sent the men out to do the fighting while they remained out of danger.

They seemed surprised when one of the gang entered.

"What is the trouble?" asked the storekeeper.

"I've come down to ask you what's ther best thing to do," was the reply.

Jim Dart was now near enough to hear and see all that was going on.

"Haven't you whipped them yet?" asked Sam Finklestein.

"No, an' we've lost about eight men."

"What's the matter with you, anyhow?" demanded the storekeeper, speaking fiercely. "You should have them all wiped out and be in possession of the claim by this time."

"They shoot too straight to allow us to do that."

"They do, hey? Why, you could rush up and finish them before they got a chance to shoot straight."

"Well, if Sam comes up an' leads us we'll try it."

Sam shrugged his shoulders.

Evidently he thought he was safe in the store.

"See here!" exclaimed the storekeeper, rubbing the bandage over his nose gently. "You fellows have been promised a good share of the gold the widow has up there, and also a share of what's taken from her claim. Why can't you do something to earn it?"

"We'll do it, if you'll jest tell us how."

"Tell you how, eh? Wasn't you chasing them long enough to shoot all of Beck's crowd, anyhow? How can I tell you what to do if you don't know how to fight?"

"Did you find Bob and the other two who went up there to rob the widow?" asked Sam.

"No!" was the reply. "But we kin guess what happened to them."

"You think they was killed?"

"I sartinly do."

The brothers looked at each other and showed signs of being uneasy.

"It might be that they got the gold and made off with it," said Sam.

"No, I don't think that. Young Wild West an' his pards went up there before ther fire got a-goin' good, an' you kin bet they fixed Breakneck Bob an' ther others."

"How many of Beck's gang did you shoot?" asked Sam, after a pause.

"Three or four."

"Is that all?"

"It was ther best we could do."

"Well, there ain't so many of them to fight, then. The tenderfoot can't do much. And the boy who was with Young Wild West could soon be fixed, if you went at him good and strong."

"Yes, but how about Young Wild West, himself?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The brothers laughed.

"He won't bother you," Sam said.

"Won't bother us?"

"No. Young Wild West and the one they call Cheyenne Charlie are in the back room, tied hand and foot, and waiting for the gang to come back and hang them!"

Jim Dart gritted hard on his teeth when he heard this.

CHAPTER XII.

CONCLUSION.

When Wild and Charlie got close to where the shooting was going on they made a circuit so as to get on the flank of the Gold Grabbers and at the same time keep out of range of the flying bullets.

The course they took led them right to the rear of Finklestein's store.

When he saw it Wild nudged his companion and whispered:

"Suppose we go in by the back way and clean out any of the gang that may be in there? Then we can rush out from the front and open fire on the others in their rear. It has got to be a finish fight, anyhow, so we may as well end it as quickly as possible."

"All right," answered Charlie.

They crept hurriedly to the rear door of the store.

Then they hurried and listened.

But not a sound came from within.

"I reckon they're outside fightin', even to ther man who keeps ther place," said the scout.

"It seems that way."

The sound of the shooting was getting further away now, showing that the honest element were retreating.

He opened the door and stepped inside, followed by Charlie.

"We must take a hand in this!" exclaimed our hero. "Here goes!"

"Ha!" exclaimed a voice from the corner of the room. "Now we have got you, Young Wild West."

Then there came a crashing noise, and before either of our friends realized what had happened a pile of boxes toppled over upon them and sent them to the floor!

Though neither of them were hurt to amount to anything, the falling boxes rendered them powerless to act for a few

seconds, and before they could do anything two men sprang upon them.

A heavy box lay across our hero's knees, and Charlie was pinned beneath a big sack of salt.

The two men were of course the Finklesteins, and they very quickly disarmed them and tied them hand and foot.

They took great pains in doing the latter, too, as they were resolved that they should not escape.

Wild and Charlie were angered at having fallen such easy victims of the schemers.

The Finklesteins remained there tantalizing our two helpless friends for perhaps ten or fifteen minutes, and then went out into the store.

Wild and Charlie could hear them talking out there, and they could tell that they were the only ones there.

Then they struggled to free themselves from their bonds. But it was a useless task and they were compelled to give it up.

They talked in whispers for some time, and it was not until they heard the two Finklesteins talking to a man out in the store that they lapsed into silence and listened.

They heard the conversation that ensued as plainly as though they were in the store, but they did not get a great deal of satisfaction from it, beyond the fact that Jim Dart was holding the Gold Grabbers off.

The Finklesteins were very shrewd men.

But they were bound to forget things once in a while.

They had forgotten to fasten the back door when they made Wild and Charlie prisoners.

Our two friends were lying on the floor not more than six feet from it.

Suddenly Wild heard the door softly opening.

He quickly turned his head that way.

Yes! The door was certainly opening!

A second later he saw a form creep into the room.

It was just light enough for him to see who it was.

It was Jim Dart.

Jim had lost no time in getting around to the rear of the shanty when he heard Sam Finklestein say his partners were in the back room, tied hand and foot.

He got to them sooner than he expected to.

Out came his knife, and the next second he was cutting the ropes that bound them.

He soon had them free.

Their weapons were lying just where the Finklesteins had placed them when they were disarmed, and they soon had them.

The brothers were talking to the man outside yet.

"I guess we will go out there and help them out of their trouble, boys," Wild whispered, and then he started for the door that opened into the store.

It was ajar and opened toward them.

He yanked it open suddenly and then stepped out, a revolver in either hand.

"How are you, gentlemen?" he coolly asked. "Just please hold up your hands."

The storekeeper was so startled that he sank back on a barrel and rolled his eyes.

Sam, however, made a grab for his revolver.

Crack!

One of Wild's revolvers spoke and with a gasp the villain sank to the floor.

The messenger from the party in the hollow near the Widow's Claim also made a move to put up a fight.

But Charlie shot him in short order.

Jim Dart seized Finklestein and shook him as though he had been a rat.

"You contemptible scoundrel!" he cried. "I guess you know who is on top now. You will see who wins the fight for the Widow's Claim."

"Mercy!" pleaded the man.

"You are not in the habit of showing any, are you?" spoke up Young Wild West. "I guess you don't expect any mercy when you ask it. Just take it easy and make up your mind that it is all over with you. You played a great game, but you have lost, that's all."

"Don't kill me! I will pay you well if you will let me go. You have killed my brother Sam; that should be enough."

"I won't kill you, but I expect somebody else will," was all Wild said to him.

"What are we going to do with him?" asked Jim.

"Bind and gag him and throw him behind the counter," was the reply. "We will attend to him later. We must go and fix the men he sent to take possession of the Widow's Claim."

Finklestein was soon fixed so he could do no further harm and put behind his own counter.

Then our three friends left the store and hastened to the Widow's Claim.

By going a roundabout way they easily kept clear of the waiting Gold Grabbers, and soon they were at the shanty.

Jim gave the signal to the miners and then they passed in to them.

The men were overjoyed when they found Young Wild West had come back.

They wanted to cheer, but Wild restrained them from doing so.

"Keep still, boys!" he cautioned. "We've got something to attend to. The fight for the Widow's Claim is going to end in a very few minutes, and when that takes place there will be no more Gold Grabbers."

He soon made them understand that they were to crawl up on the waiting villains and capture them.

If they showed fight no mercy was to be shown to them.

In five minutes all was ready.

Palliser was left with the widow, and then they sallied forth.

Jim went ahead, as he knew exactly where the villains were located.

When pretty close to the hollow Jim ran almost into a man.

It was one of the Gold Grabbers, who had ventured out to see if their messenger was coming back.

"What did Finklestein say?" he asked in a whisper, thinking Dart was surely the fellow who went out.

"He says that the jig is up!" cried Jim in a loud tone. "The first man who moves will get a bullet through his carcass!"

The words had a startling effect upon the villains gathered in the hollow.

They sprang to their feet in dismay.

But they were rendered desperate, for all that.

They began firing wildly in every direction.

Some of the bullets came dangerously close to our friends.

Wild gave the word to fire.

A volley rang out and then the survivors yelled for quarter.

"I guess it is all over, gentlemen," said Young Wild West, as he walked into the hollow. "Just hold up your hands!"

There were only nine who had escaped from being killed or badly wounded and they were a very meek lot.

They suffered themselves to be disarmed and bound, after which our hero sent for the three scoundrels in the widow's shanty and all the prisoners were marched down to Finklestein's store.

Tricky Tom was pretty badly wounded.

The entire gang was placed in the store and Beck agreed to remain in charge of them until morning.

Wild and his partners went back to the Widow's Claim and helped get her effects back into the shanty and right things up. Then they turned in for the night.

When they got up the next morning the widow declared that she was ready to sell out her claim, if she could find some one to buy it.

Young Wild West looked it over and made her an offer.

It was gladly accepted.

Arrangements were quickly made for the payment of the money, and then Wild declared that he would have a gang of honest men working there in less than a month.

Right here we will say that he did, and that the purchase of the claim was one of the best investments he had ever made.

When our friends walked down to the heart of the camp after breakfast they were surprised to see that the big pine in front of Finklestein's store had borne fruit during the night.

The entire lot of Gold Grabbers had been hung by the miners!

"It's all right," said Beck, stepping up. "Jest read this."

He handed Wild a bill of sale signed by Finklestein, transferring the store to Beck.

"He give me this just a few minutes afore he died," said the miner.

Wild and his partners went back to Weston in due time, and a little later they learned that Ford Palliser had married the widow.

Next week's issue will contain "YOUNG WILD WEST AND THE BRANDED BAND; OR, THE SCOURGE OF SKELETON SKIT."

SEND POSTAL FOR OUR FREE CATALOGUE

CURRENT NEWS

Approximately 225,000 war horses have been sold in East St. Louis, Ill., since the European war began. The total sum paid for the horses is approximately \$40,000,000. About 7,000 mules have been sold for a total of \$995,000. The Italian government has recently made a contract for 8,000 horses to be filled in thirty days. British, French and Belgian buyers and agents for the U. S. Army are taking a total of 2,000 horses a week.

The Pension Bureau has received 66,000 applications for increases of widows' pensions under the law passed by Congress at the last session. Of the applications 25,000 already have been allowed, and allowances are being made at the rate of about 2,000 a day. Under the new law widows who have reached the age of seventy years, and under former laws were entitled to a pension of \$12 a month, are entitled to have their pension increased to \$20 a month.

A walnut tree in the yard of the residence of L. E. Blain, of Albany, Ore., will probably produce fifteen bushels of nuts this year. The tree is so full of nuts that it attracts attention from all who pass it. It is by far the largest crop the tree has ever produced, and a California man who saw it this week said that he had visited walnut orchards of that State, but had never seen a yield on any tree which would equal that of this one. The tree is about twenty-two years old.

Measuring gasoline pumps are mulcting motorists of millions of dollars a year, according to an investigation by the Federal Bureau of Standards. In Illinois alone the loss is not less than \$500,000 a year. Tests in many cities have confirmed previous conditions and actual tests of the types of pumps used by retailers at the bureau here have shown 80 per cent. of them to give short measure. Some of the pumps have faults of construction and others are susceptible to manipulation by the dealer.

Crude oil that had been thrown overboard by Uncle Sam's warships to quell the raging waves which wrecked the U. S. S. Memphis during the recent storm stuck to the wings of seagulls and other water fowl taking refuge in the bays along the coast and rendered them helpless and unable to fly for several days, according to an announcement from the Navy Department. Members of the United States Marine Corps, on expeditionary duty at Puerto Plata, captured hundreds of the birds with their naked hands. The oil-begrimed fowl wandered up and down on the beach, crying pitifully, while the marines stood guard to see that boys did not harm them.

It is announced that eight hundred former U. S. Boy Scouts living on the West Side of New York City have formed an organization called the Junior Marine Scouts, for training in the duties of U. S. marines. The organization is in no way affiliated with the U. S. Boy Scouts, and plans are under way to make the body national in scope and character. The Junior Marine Scouts have taken up as their special plea to others that the training they will receive on land and sea is of greater benefit than either land or sea training taken separately, and hope to see the idea spread over the entire country. Mr. I. W. Irving, 146 West 105th street, New York, is at the head of the new organization, and several prominent citizens have interested themselves in the movement.

Larkspur poisoning has been found by the Department of Agriculture to be, next to loco poisoning, the greatest cause of loss in Western cattle herds. According to a recent bulletin, its destructive effects are experienced in all mountainous regions from the Rockies westward. Sheep are immune, and horses rarely eat enough of the plant to produce any ill effects. Where the plant is abundant it is advisable to use the ranges for sheep rather than cattle, or to combine sheep grazing and cattle grazing in such a way that the areas infested with larkspur shall first be eaten down by the sheep. Poisoned cattle are benefited by hypodermic injections of physostigmin salicylate, pilocarpin hydrochloride and strychnin sulphate. These treatments may be followed by hypodermic injections of whisky.

An efficient and practical stove to be used at the table for quickly preparing breakfast or luncheon, has recently been introduced. It is provided with two shallow pans, one deep vessel with a grid for broiling, and an egg poacher with four egg cups. The shallow pans are used as griddles, as covers for the deep vessel, and as heat reflectors. Toasting is done in a wire drawer which is between the two heating elements, so that both sides of the toast are at the same time exposed to the intense glow of the heating elements. The deep vessel is used above the heating chamber for boiling, poaching, steaming, creaming, etc., just as a stew pan is used over a coal or gas fire. The deep vessel is used below the heating chamber for broiling and for all cooking operations where heat is applied from above. Eggs can be fried in the griddle on top, toast can be prepared in the toaster drawer, and bacon or chops can be broiled in the deep vessel below, all at the same time. The current consumption of the stove is about 575 watts.

MR. WALL OF WALL STREET

OR

The Man Who Came from the Klondike

By DICK ELLISON

(A SERIAL STORY)

CHAPTER XIX.

DICK DITCHETT BOBS UP AGAIN.

"Make way!" shouted one, forcing Fred aside.

At the same instant a shot rang out, crashing through the glass door above their heads.

To his dismay, Fred saw the Klondiker rushing toward them, wild-eyed and furious.

"You infernal skunks!" he yelled.

Then up went his revolver, and he fired again.

As Silver fired the second shot the man who had shoved Fred wheeled about and drew on him, but Fred struck up his hand, and the shot flew harmless.

The man then turned and fled up the street.

"Out of the way!" roared Silver, when Fred tried to stop him.

Through the door he dashed and fired after the flying man as he ran.

Fred gave chase.

He fully expected to be shot by those behind him, for a number of men came crowding out of the saloon.

No shot came, however. Silver and his man had now disappeared around the corner of one of the streets leading down to the Yukon River.

None of the passersby paid very much attention to all this, for such doings are common enough in Dawson.

If the firing had kept up no doubt the Northwest police would have got after the men, but it had now ceased, and no sign of the officers was to be seen.

Fred hurried on to the river levee and began a search for the Klondiker.

He could not get much satisfaction.

The men along the levee of whom he inquired would not admit having seen Silver.

Fred was sharp enough to understand that Silver was a known character in Dawson, while he carried the brand "tenderfoot" all over him.

Those whom he asked for information were certainly not giving Silver away.

The creeks were now open and business was exceedingly lively along the levee.

While Fred stood gawking around a stern-wheel steamer put out into the Yukon.

From the crowd of miners seen on her deck it was evident that she was bound up the Klondike.

"So you didn't catch him, Fred Morgan?" a voice suddenly said in his ear. "Ha! Ha! Wish I had been a minute sooner; then Jack Silver would be here now."

Of course Fred turned before all this was said.

To his astonishment there stood Dick Ditchett, looking just the same as ever.

It took Fred all aback. It was hard for the moment to realize that he was not in New York, as he looked at Ditchett, who stood calmly chewing the end of an unlighted cigar.

"Well, what are you staring at, Fred?" chuckled the detective. "There's your man aboard the Sunrise—can't you see?"

"Mr. Ditchett! Who would ever have thought of seeing you here?" gasped Fred.

"Well, here I am, and there's Jack Silver. See? He is waving his hand to us. No, by Jove, he's shaking his fist at us! There—don't you see? Standing at the stern next to that fellow with the red shirt!"

And there, sure enough, was Silver on the deck of the steamer.

Once more he shook his fist at Fred and the detective and then, mingling with the crowd, disappeared.

Fred was angry now, and for Nellie's sake.

"That's fine business!" he exclaimed. "He has gone off and deserted his wife!"

"So?" replied Ditchett. "Well, there's no telling what a fellow will do when he's drunk."

"And that's what Jack Silver is."

"By his wife, you mean your typewriter girl that was."

"She is Mrs. Silver now," said Fred, stiffly. "It's a shame."

"That's what it is, and it wouldn't have been if I could have caught him in time. Jack Silver on Wall street cut a figure which no one could mistake, but up here in this benighted country there are so many of his kind that I never realized who it was till I saw the Sunrise pull out and caught sight of you putting questions to every one you met. But you don't seem a bit glad to see me, Fred. When I caught sight of you it was like running up against an old friend."

"I am glad to see you, Mr. Ditchett," replied Fred, holding out his hand. "I'm troubled, that's all. We only arrived here yesterday. Jack began to drink just as soon as he hit the town, and his wife is almost wild. Where is that steamer bound?"

"Up to the Klondike; up some of the creeks, perhaps. I don't know, but it's easy found out."

"You saw him go aboard?"

"Yes; he ran up the gangplank like a wild man."

"Was there a fellow running ahead of him?"

"I didn't see anybody. What happened?"

"Jack had a row in Ed Kerry's saloon. He fired at a man and chased him down here. That's all I know."

"And it's all you're likely to know for some time to come. Cool down, Fred. Why don't you ask me if I found Mr. Wall?"

"Well, I ask you now."

"And I answer no, and yet I have absolute evidence that he came here. I followed him to 'Frisco and from there to Seattle. From Seattle I chased him up to Sitka, but he had just left for Juneau. I ran down to Juneau and found he had just left for Dawson. Got to Dawson and heard that he had gone to Forty Mile Creek. Chased down the river to Forty Mile; heard that he had gone up French Creek. By the time I got there he had been and gone and since then I have chased him from pillar to post, up this creek and down that, over into the Copper River country, and now back again to Dawson. I have reason to believe that he is here now."

"What an infernal pity that Jack could not have held his horses," said Fred; "then we could have settled our business up in short order, but now we are all at sea."

"That's what the matter," replied Ditchett, "but look here; you don't say a word about my work. Don't you think I have had a pretty hard time on this case?"

"Well, I should say you had," exclaimed Fred. "If you want me to throw bouquets at you, here goes one now. I think you have had a hard time, and I don't believe there is another detective in America who would have stuck to this search the way you have, so there."

"Bouquet accepted with due thanks," chuckled Ditchett. "But I can't stay talking here. I've got to look for that slippery eel, Mr. Wall of Wall street, or the first thing I know he'll slip through my fingers again. Where are you stopping?"

"At the Ocean Hotel."

"Good! What brought you here?"

"We came on Silver's business. I just came along with the idea of taking up a claim or speculating—anything that might turn up."

"Well, it's a great country, and there is lots of money to be made up here if you hit it right. If I was a younger man I'd jump right in and strike for a fortune."

"And why don't you? I don't believe you will ever find Mr. Wall."

"Never fear! I'll find him."

"What do you hear of him? Has he broken down in health?"

"Not a bit of it! He's livelier than ever and as

mad as ever. He locates mines now and then, and the prospectors pay him big money for it."

"You don't mean it! What does he know about mines?"

"Nothing at all, but he's crazy, and these prospectors are a very superstitious lot. You will find any number of them who take a lot of stock in the sayings of a crazy man when it comes to locating gold. You would be amazed if you had heard all I have."

"Do you mean to tell me that Mr. Wall has actually pointed out where gold is to be found?"

"I do. In as many as a dozen instances, and what is more, his predictions have come true. He is known as the Golden Prophet, and his services are very much in demand. That I have been steered away from the man by those who are using him there can be no doubt. But I can't stand talking here, Fred. I've got to hustle. See you later at the Queens. So-long."

And off trotted Dick Ditchett, leaving Fred to wonder as he made his way back to the hotel whether, after all, he was actually in the Klondike or still in New York.

"What a fellow he is," he said to himself. "I actually believe that if I was to go the moon I should find the everlasting Mr. Ditchett bobbing up serenely there."

CHAPTER XX.

DICK DITCHETT DISCOVERS THE PLOT ON THE SEA EAGLE.

Fred found himself with his hands full when he came to tackle Nellie at the Queens Hotel.

We pass over the scene, for trouble of that sort is not interesting.

First Mrs. Jack was furious, then hysterical, then heartbroken, and so it went, but after a while she came to her senses and was ready to listen to any plan Fred had which was likely to help her get her husband back.

"I've been inquiring about Jack's former habits from the hotel clerk," said Fred, then. "He knows him well. He says he is liable to stay on this drunk for a month. What we want to do is to follow him up Klondike River and try and locate him—that is all."

"But how can it be done?" inquired Nellie. "When does the next steamer go?"

"Not for several days," replied Fred, "and, anyhow, to take the steamer wouldn't do us so much good, for we have got to stop and make inquiries by the way."

"What shall we do then? I've got very little money. Jack is just as mean as he can be, to go off and leave me in such a fix."

(To be continued.)

FACTS WORTH READING

FIRST CHINESE GIRL STUDENT.

Miss Margaret Chinn of Seattle is the first Chinese woman ever to matriculate at the University of Wisconsin. She has registered for a full course. She is the daughter of Mrs. Lula Chinn and lives with her mother at No. 1248 King street. Miss Chinn intends to graduate. Nearly twenty years ago she was born in Canton, China. Miss Chinn can write and speak the Chinese language with ease, despite her long residence in this country.

\$6,000 IN WALNUTS.

How the rain storms the last few days shook down \$6,000 for W. O. McClintock, a well-known rancher of the walnut district, west of Pomona, Cal., is brought to light in an account of crop prosperity. McClintock has a walnut orchard. He has taken special care of the trees and as a result, when the rain and wind came, they left the ground beneath the trees covered with a thick mat of the nuts. He weighed his crop and found that at the present market price of the nuts he has \$6,000 worth.

UNION OF HOUSEMAIDS NOW.

Minimum wage for housemaids, \$7 a week; working time, ten hours a day.

This is the outcome of the organization of the Pittsfield, Mass., Servant Girls' Union, which it is predicted, is likely to spread to Boston.

Formerly housemaids in Pittsfield could be hired for \$5 a week.

And the worst, from the housewife's view, is yet to come.

Reason—the housemaids are seeking to affiliate the washwomen and scrubwomen, who are expected to demand a minimum of \$2 a day instead of the \$1.50 they now receive.

TREES PLANTED BY MACHINE.

The United States Forestry Service has adopted a new invention which plants from 10,000 to 15,000 forest tree seedlings a day. Previously the planting has been done by hand at the rate of 1,200 to 1,500 trees each day per man.

The machine is about the size of an ordinary mowing machine, and is operated by three men and two horses. One man drives the team while the other two handle the seedlings. The machine makes a furrow, in which the trees are set at any desired distance, and an automatic device indicates where they should be dropped. Two metal-tired wheels push and roll the dirt firmly down around the roots.

COYOTE ATTACKS AUTOIST.

That a coyote that will attack the front end of any automobile, traveling thirty miles an hour, allow himself to be run over and then get up and attack

the driver of the car, who, out of curiosity, stopped to see what damage was done, must be mad, is the opinion of P. Y. Gillson, who enjoyed this experience on Lakeview Hill, near Carson, Nev., the other night.

The coyote was game, according to Gillson, but was so badly cut up that it was easily driven off with rocks before it bit anyone. Gillson was accompanied on the trip by County Commissioner Henrich.

A MYSTERY SOLVED.

The aluminum pants button mystery has been solved.

Soldier sleuths at Camp Lincoln, Mo., bored the secret out of a chastened artilleryman, who arrived at camp just three minutes before reveille.

Aluminum pants buttons, be it known, have been disappearing from the olive drab uniforms with persistent regularity. The quartermaster for weeks has been implored and beseeched, begged and threatened by desperate guardsmen, who demanded buttons to replace the nails, pieces of rope and safety pins used as substitutes. He wondered where the buttons were going. Recently the artilleryman confessed.

"It'sh thish way. Thesh pantsh buttons, after they are mashed, are just the size of a nickel. They zackly fit in schlot machines."

DECLINE OF A STRANGE TRADE.

The trade in human hair, which was one of the chief items in the export trade of Hongkong, has been falling off so seriously of late that it may disappear altogether. The strange commerce reached its highest point in 1910, when the United States made purchases of human hair in the Hongkong market to the value of nearly \$700,000. In addition to this, exports of almost equal value went to Europe. At that time the preparation of the hair in its various stages was among the leading Hongkong industries, a number of factories flourishing, and a small army of hair collectors, workers and brokers making their living at it. Most of the factories were small concerns which cleaned hair on a commission basis or disposed of their product to middlemen, who collected large quantities for export.

But the styles of hair dressing in the United States and Europe gradually changed and there was a marked falling off in the demand for the commodity, especially of the better grades.

Europe's demand fell off still more after the war began, and at the same time the American demand dwindled so much that Chinese brokers gradually ceased to pay attention to it. So serious has been the effect of the decreased demand that a revival of the trade later on will probably be a difficult matter.

DRIVEN OUT WEST

OR

THE BOY TENDERFOOT OF LUCKY STRIKE

By "PAWNEE JACK"

(A SERIAL STORY.)

CHAPTER XI.

HAVING A BRUSH WITH REDSKINS.

"Hello, there, redskin!" exclaimed Harry, as he and Dan boldly rode up to the brave. "Are you waiting for us?"

"Ugh!" grunted the Blackfoot, keenly eyeing them. "What for do the palefaces follow Black Bear? Do they seek war?"

"No," replied Harry. "We are good friends with the Blackfeet warriors."

"How!" exclaimed the savage. "Palefaces no broth of Black Bear. The white boy speaks with crooked tongue."

"See here, Injun," said Dan, suddenly, "why have yer got yer mug streaked with war paint? Is thar an uprisin' at ther reservation?"

"Wagh!" exclaimed the savage, his jet black eyes gleaming, and before they realized what he was up to, he pulled a tomahawk from his wampun belt and sent his pony plunging at Harry.

The next instant he was beside the startled boy. He half arose from the bare back of his mount and raised the hatchet to brain the tenderfoot.

Harry was taken off his guard. But he did not lose his presence of mind, and the moment he saw the tomahawk descending he flung up his rifle and the handle of the Indian's weapon came down upon it with terrific force.

The rifle did not stop the hatchet, but it turned it aside, and as the blade slid away, the boy doubled up his fist and dealt the Indian a smash in the eye that almost unseated him.

He gave a series of blood-curdling whoops and slid over on the opposite side of his pony just as Dan shot at him, causing the bullet to fly harmlessly over his body.

The redskin was now almost concealed behind his pony, which went dashing away toward some nearby trees.

Hanging to his pony's mane with one hand and the animal's tail with one foot, the treacherous redskin sped away at the top of the animal's speed.

"Go for him, Dan!" cried Harry. "Don't let him escape!"

He was about to urge his own horse after the

fugitive when Dan suddenly shouted in excited tones:

"Stop! Stop! Don't foller him!"

"Why not?" demanded the amazed boy. "He would have taken our scalps if we hadn't been ready for him."

"Jist cast yer eye towards them thar trees he's a-headin' fer."

Glancing in the indicated direction, Harry was startled to see a troop of at least thirty mounted Indians dash from among the trees and surround the redskin who was riding away.

"An ambuscade!" exclaimed the boy.

"Yes, yes. But we've spoiled their plan ter way-lay us, pard. I reckon we'll hev ter cut loose an' make a run fer it now. Ther hull caboodle of 'em will be after us in a few minutes."

"What's the matter with them, anyway?"

"It's putty evident thar's been an uprisin', an' a bunch of 'em has took ter ther warpath. They'll do a hull lot of mischief afore ther troops rounds 'em up agin in ther reservation."

"Why have they broken loose, Dan?"

"Hard ter say," replied the scout. "But I reckon it's ther old story of ther people at ther tradin' post, robbin', swindlin', an' sellin' 'em rotten whisky agin ther law. They've got some grievance, yer kin bet yer boots, or they wouldn't dig up ther hatchet."

"And they would vent their rage on people who never harmed them, eh?"

"Sure they do. Any one with a white skin is their prey, pard."

"Look out, Dan! They are coming this way!"

Wild war-whoops now pealed out from the savages, and they lashed their ponies with the knotted thongs on the ends of their reins and sent them like a whirlwind toward Harry and the scout.

"It's time ter fight out!" exclaimed Dan.

"Can't we stand them off with our Winchesters?"

"Thar's too many agin us."

"All right. Lead the way."

They dug spurs into the flanks of their bronchos and dashed away, with the whole yelling horde of red demons in hot pursuit.

An exciting race now ensued, the old scout keeping close to Harry, for the boy was not accustomed to fast riding, and Dan feared that he would be thrown from the saddle.

It was remarkable how well the boys rode, however, and as their bronchos were much fleetier than the Indians' ponies, they swiftly began to distance the redskins.

For a few moments it looked as if they might get away in safety, but a sudden accident soon changed the situation.

Harry's horse stumbled, and as the boy was not prepared for it, he shot over the broncho's head and landed on the grass.

A groan of dismay escaped Dan as he reined in.

The boy was bruised some, but he quickly bounded to his feet and cried:

"Go, Dan, go! Save yourself, while there is time!"

"Not much I won't!" growled the old scout, dismounting. "I ain't desertin' a pard in distress, I ain't. Git behind that fallen horse. His leg is broken, an' he ain't of no more earthly use 'cept ter act as a shield fer us. Ha! They're firin' now."

The yelling Indians had started in to discharge their rifles at the pair, and before they suffered any injury both dropped behind the body of the fallen horse, and Harry flung his rifle to his shoulder.

"I'm a deadshot," said he. "I didn't work in a Bowery shooting gallery for nothing. Shall I drop them?"

"Blaze away! Blaze away!" replied Dan.

The boy took quick aim and then his repeater began to work.

His marksmanship was truly wonderful, for every time he let a bullet go it hit the Indian he aimed at.

Several of them dropped from the saddle by the time Dan began to blaze away, and the Indians began to get worried.

They reined in their horses and sent a few more scattering shots at the plucky pair, but their bullets were driven into the fallen horse and put an end to the misery it was suffering.

When Dan began to fire too the savages resorted to throwing themselves flat on their ponies to avoid the bullets, but it was a useless stratagem, for our friends hit them anyhow.

Finding they were getting the worst of it, they quickly drew rein, whirled their mustangs around, and beat a hasty retreat, leaving four of their number lying on the ground.

One of the wiry little mustangs which lost its rider came dashing toward them, and Dan suddenly darted back to his own broncho and took a lasso from the saddle pommel.

As the mustang dashed by he let the noose fly, and caught the animal around the neck, and threw it down.

"Grab him! Grab him, Harry, an' you'll have a nag ter straddle," roared Dan. "Yer can't git away from hyer on foot."

The boy rushed over to the fallen beast and sat on its head until Dan had time to go to his aid.

They got the animal up and put Harry's saddle

and bridle on it in place of the single line and nose-band the Indian had been using when he was alive.

Luckily the mustang had been broken to a saddle, and when the boy mounted him he found the beast quite tractable.

By this time Dan had secured his own mustang, and as the Indians swung around and saw them another fierce yell burst from their lips, and they came charging back, headed by Black Bear.

"It's time ter go!" exclaimed Dan.

"Bust ahead!" cried Harry. "I don't wish to get burned at the stake. These reds are vindictive. They want to avenge their fallen friends. This time a few shots won't drive them back, Dan."

"Come on, then; come on!" cried the scout.

And away they raced again, with the whole whooping gang tearing along in the rear, with their minds intent upon murdering the boy and his old friend.

CHAPTER XII.

WITH THE U. S. CAVALRY.

"Harry, thar comes a troop of cavalry from Fort Shaw! By ginger, them redskins will hev thar payss full in a minute. I reckon we'll reach Choteau without so much trouble now, pard!" cried Dan, after ten minutes' hard riding.

They had gone around a bend in the trail, with a mass of rocks and shrubs at one side, when they suddenly burst upon the glittering array of rifles as the soldiers came galloping toward them.

"I've heard that there isn't a finer body of men near the main divide of the Rockies," said the boy, as he eagerly scanned the regulars, "and they certainly look the part. There's fifty in the troop if there's one."

"More'n enough ter teach Black Bear a good lesson," replied the scout, with a grin. "An' ther beauty of it is ther redskins don't know as they're a-comin'. Now fer the explainin' act."

Up to the lieutenant in command they dashed, and Harry saluted him.

"How are you?" said he. "We're in trouble. Permit me to introduce myself: I am Harry Nevada, a tenderfoot from New York. My friend is Mustang Dan, the scout."

"Glad to know you, gentlemen," replied the officer. "And I am Lieut. Jack Barton, of the — U. S. Cavalry, from Fort Shaw. May I ask the nature of the trouble you are in?"

"A band of about thirty bucks under Black Bear have left the reservation and gone on the warpath. They are chasing us. We dropped several, and the rest are after our scalps."

"Indeed! We know all about the outbreak, and have been on a hunt for them. It's luck we came this way. Now we may be able to either drive them back to the Blackfoot country, or wipe them out before they have time to commit more depredations."

(To be continued.)

TIMELY TOPICS

While the motor vessel W. S., of twenty gross tons, was voyaging from San Diego, Cal., to Mazatlan, Mexico, says a report to the United States Steamboat Inspection Service, a whale came up under the vessel near Geronimo Island, Mexico, and knocked a hole in it which caused it to fill rapidly and sink. The crew took to their lifeboat and were rescued by those on board another motor vessel. No lives were lost.

When a prowling cougar crossed the Pacific Highway, near the north end of Jackson Prairie, eleven miles southeast of Chehalis, Wash., it fell a victim to a rifle shot fired by George Blattner, who was sitting on his front porch. One shot near the heart caused the animal to give a wild lunge into the air and fall dead. The cougar measured seven feet three inches from tip too tip, and was a hungry-looking female. It is thought that lack of food emboldened it to come out into the open.

The giant proportions and the bravery of Frank J. Margwarth, of Philadelphia, cost him his life early the other day in a \$2,000 fire that wrecked his cafe and home. Margwarth, who weighed nearly 300 pounds, remained in the burning building until satisfied that his wife, child, pet monkey and canary had been rescued, and then, overcome by smoke, became wedged in the second-story window, through which the entire crew of firemen attempted to pull him with a rope. When he was extricated he had inhaled flames and died while being taken to the Episcopal Hospital. He was fifty-three years old.

Thunderstorms are most frequent in Florida and northern New Mexico. The Weather Bureau station having the highest record for a period of ten years is Tampa, Fla., with 944 thunderstorms in ten years, or nearly a hundred a year. The other Florida stations had more than 800. In the New Mexico center of high thunderstorm frequency Santa Fe is credited with 732 thunderstorms in ten years. The fewest storms are recorded on the Pacific coast, especially in California and Washington. The record for fewest thunderstorms is held by San Francisco, with only eight in ten years.

The steamship Yurimaguas has achieved the distinction of being the first merchantman to make the trip from the headwaters of the Amazon through the Panama Canal to the west coast of South America. On Aug. 4 last the Yurimaguas arrived at Callao, Peru, having made the journey from Iquitos, the head of navigation on the Amazon, down that river, over the waters of the Atlantic and the Caribbean, and through the canal. The owner of the ves-

sel, Luis Felipe Morey, a wealthy rubber planter, says that he intends to establish a regular steamship service between Iquitos and Callao.

For the use of motion picture theaters and exhibitors there has recently been developed an automatic-stop, motor-driven rewinder, taking reels of all sizes up to 2,500 feet. The reel of film to be rewound, as well as an empty reel, is placed in the proper compartment. The film is only rewound while the doors of the container are closed, thus eliminating all danger of fire through carelessness. The attention of the operator is not required at the end of the rewinding, as the machine stops automatically. Further, should there occur a break in the film, the machine stops automatically at the point where the film is torn, to allow of splicing.

About 10,000 of the 20,000 civilian employees on the Panama Canal quit work on account of a strike, according to press dispatches from Panama. It is estimated that the number of strikers is 500, while the remainder of the 10,000 are said to have been intimidated. The activity of the strikers has been confined to the city of Panama. A dozen leaders of the striking negro employees in the Canal Zone were arrested charged with violation of the intimidation laws. The arrests took place after Lieut. Col. Chester Harding, U. S. A., Acting Governor of the Canal Zone, had urged President Valdez that some action was necessary. All the locks and dams and other parts of the canal were under guard. The Mechanical, Municipal, Building, Commissary and Quartermaster Divisions were short of men. So far there had been no delay in the dredging or to ships passing through the canal.

As a result of the shortage of tonnage for oversea trade we find every shipyard and semblance of shipyard working to their utmost capacity, and every week launchings either on the Great Lakes, Pacific Coast and Atlantic Coast of large freight and passenger vessels, not only for American account, but also for foreign account are in order. The fact that every nation in the world (even China and belligerent nations) are building vessels to-day, and that American builders are able to obtain foreign orders is ample proof, in the opinion of the National Gazette, "that the shipbuilders are able to meet competition even though that competition include the cheapest labor in the world, that of the Chinese. Now that the shipbuilders have established their industry on a large order it is solely up to the American people and the United States Government that no unnecessary obstacles will be allowed to retard these interests in general competition with the world in general."

WILD WEST WEEKLY

NEW YORK, DECEMBER 8, 1916.

TERMS TO SUBSCRIBERS

Single Copies05 Cents
One Copy Three Months65 Cents
One Copy Six Months	1.25
One Copy One Year	2.50

POSTAGE FREE

HOW TO SEND MONEY—At our risk send P. O. Money Order, Check or Registered Letter; remittances in any other way are at your risk. We accept Postage Stamps the same as cash. When sending silver wrap the Coin in a separate piece of paper to avoid cutting the envelope. Write your name and address plainly. Address letters to

Harry E. Wolff, Pres. } **FRANK TOUSEY, Publisher**
N. Hastings Wolff, Treas. }
Charles E. Nylander, Sec. } 168 West 23d St., N. Y.

Good Current News Articles

The negro population of the United States is approximately 12,000,000, the larger part (probably 10,000,000), being in the Southern States.

The New York Bible Society distributed 320,715 Bibles during the last twelve months. So reports Dr. George William Carter, the society's general secretary. The Bibles were printed in fifty-three languages and many were distributed to immigrants as they arrived at Ellis Island.

Wholesale prices on men's and women's footwear have been advanced 50 to 75 cents a pair, and certain lines have been withdrawn entirely from the market owing to a big shortage in leather, according to an announcement made in Pittsburgh, Pa., recently by the officers of the Pennsylvania Shoe Travelers' Association.

"Where is your daughter?" softly spoke an east side undertaker the other afternoon when he called at the home of Mrs. J. J. Manard of Toledo, O. "She's up-stairs sleeping," answered the mother, amazed at the paraphernalia laid on the floor by the undertaker. She swooned when the man said he came to "prepare" the girl's body. It was a telephone hoax, he learned.

A thief stole the two small wheels from the front of an invalid chair owned by Mrs. C. K. Lush of No. 519 Jefferson street, Milwaukee, Wis. Mrs. Lush is an invalid and was going to go to the theatre, for the first time in three years. The chair had been left in front of the house while Mr. Lush went in to carry Mrs. Lush down to the wheel chair. During his absence the two wheels were stolen. Mrs. Lush went to the theatre in an automobile.

There is no secret that in a vigorous way the development of the aeroplane on an extensive scale and with a view to its general use both for passenger and

freight service is quietly proceeding, says Leslie's. There are those who do not hesitate to predict that within the next decade, and perhaps within five years, the aeroplane will be in common use and will be brought within the reach of men of moderate means, so as to afford them a ready vehicle of transportation from their city to their summer homes. The interesting fact is noted by President Edward M. Hagar of the Wright company that he has recently received a request for estimates on ten aeroplanes, each of three-ton freight capacity, with which valuable ore from an inaccessible mine is to be carried from the mountains to a convenient shipping point. The part that the aeroplane is playing in the great European war astonishes all observers, and must inevitably lead at the close of the war to a wider utilization of the aeroplane in peaceful pursuits.

Grins and Chuckles

Coroner—We found nothing in the man's pockets, ma'am, except three buttons, one handkerchief and a receipted bill. The Sobbing Inquirer—A receipted bill? Then 'tain't my husband.

Mr. Dow met Mr. Duff with a bit of startling news. "Rather sudden that about Jones, wasn't it?" he said. "Died at six o'clock this morning." Mr. Duff nearly collapsed. "Good gracious, you don't say so!" he said. "Why, I met him in the subway station last night and—and—he was alive then!"

A Long Island teacher was recounting the story of Red Riding Hood. After describing the woods and the wild animals that flourished therein, she added: "Suddenly Red Riding Hood heard a great noise. She turned about, and what do you suppose she said standing there, gazing at her and showing all its sharp, white teeth?" "Teddy Roosevelt!" volunteered one of the boys.

A navy officer on recruiting duty sends the following from some unidentified newspaper: A young fellow, anxious to enlist, had just been examined by the doctor. "I am sorry," said the doctor, "but your teeth are not good enough." "What!" exclaimed the indignant recruit. "My teeth ain't good enough, ain't they? Well, they're the same teeth what you passed my brother with yesterday."

Willie Jones was playing with the Robinson children next door. When luncheon time came Mrs. Robinson asked him if he wouldn't like to stay. "No, thank you," said Willie, "I think I'd better go home. My mother will be expecting me." "Suppose I telephone over and ask her if you may stay," suggested the hostess. "Please don't do that, Mrs. Robinson," said the boy, earnestly. "We've got cocoanut pie for dessert to-day, and your cook told me you've only got prunes."

THE ROBBER'S NEST.

By Kit Clyde

It was a wild, stormy night in the month of December, a few years ago, in a wild portion of the country in the central part of the State of New York.

Upon a lonely road, miles from any other house, was situated a large wooden building.

It was reported to be haunted.

Others said it was inhabited by a band of robbers and murderers who enticed the unsuspecting traveler into it, and never let him leave alive.

The house was inhabited, for, from the old-fashioned window could be seen the light of a lamp or candle within.

We take the privilege of an author, and enter unobserved and unbidden.

Inside the house was a large sitting-room, or rather general bar.

A large, old-fashioned fireplace throws out light and heat, making the room comfortable.

Four men sit in front of the fireplace either smoking pipes or chewing tobacco, and spitting into the blazing fire.

A woman sits in one corner of the room, a pale, weak, cowed creature.

On a small stand at her side is a tallow candle, and she is sewing upon some rough garments.

The oldest of the men is about fifty-five years of age. A short, thick-set man, with powerful muscles, grizzled hair and beard.

The other three were taller, each powerful men, with faces at once cruel and savage.

The pale, sad-looking woman arose with a sigh, and left the room to enter another, taking the candle in her hand.

Her face still showed some traces of beauty, and her sad gray eyes were large and beautiful.

She looked like one whose bright young dream of life had been blasted, whose every hope was crushed.

She took a great demijohn, a bottle and some glasses in her arms and carried them into the room. Placing them on the stand, she returned for the candle.

"Come, boys, fill up, 'twill do ye good," said the old man, with a villainous face, turning about to the demijohn.

He poured out a glass full of brandy and drank it. The others followed his example.

"I tell ye, boys, that does me good," said the old man, whose years gave him commanding power over the others.

"Do you reckon any one will come to-night?" asked one of the younger.

"No, Jim," said the old man. "Who d'ye s'pose is goin' to travel sich a night?"

"I hev seen people travel in wuss weather than this is, Dave," said another.

"Jim Burns is always seein' sights which nobody

else ever gits to see," said old Dave, as he was known. "But, boys, there ain't much a-doin' at this inn now, like there was years ago, when my boy Jonathan there was younger. His mother was alive then, an' we three, though he war only a kid, used to chuck four or five into the black pool a week. We've hed heaps o' gold; I've seen the old woman stand an' look at it, while her eyes glittered almost as bright as the money. I kin remember one man as came here wi' a nice young wife; they had lost their way. It was my business to work 'em off, so I went into the room. Oh, they war a-sleeping' so sweetly it looked a shame. He lay with his throat bare and his neckerchief around it; she sleepin' on his strong right arm, her pretty golden hair scattered all over the pillow.

"I took hold of his necktie an' began to twist. He soon awoke, and then commenced a struggle, but I knew my business and kept on twistin' until he could not speak. His wife awoke, an' sich screams I never heard. I kept on until the eyes o' her husband popped out o' his head, his tongue was out at his mouth, an' blood gushed out o' his nose. The room was in the second story right over the black pool. The young woman could stand it no longer and I believe she was mad, for she struck me and sprang through the window. I saw her goin' and fired my pistol at her. I heerd a splash as she struck the waters of the black pool. But she was never seen afterwards, and her body could never be found. We hev never heerd of her, though it is now past ten years since that night. We got heaps o' money from him, fur the feller was rich, and they had rale diamonds, no shams."

As old Dave Ruggles concluded his horrible story a loud knocking was heard at the door.

"There," said Jim Burns, "I knowed as how some one would come."

"Come, Angie," said old Dave Ruggles, chief and proprietor of the robbers' nest, "we must git this demijohn an' glasses out o' sight. Bring in the stranger or as many as there may be o' 'em, and take 'em up to room number seven. We'll enter the panel there and knock him in the head as he sleeps. We must get out o' the way. Jonathan Ruggles, give your wife a kick, just to hurry her up a mite."

Jonathan was not slow to obey, and the woman, smarting yet not daring to complain, from the kick of her brutal husband, hastened to carry out the demijohn, bottle and glasses. These she placed in the hall on a rude bench.

The four men passed quickly from the room. The knocking at the door was repeated, and she returned for the candle.

Going with it into the hall, she opened the door. The candle flickered in the gust of wind and almost went out.

A tall, powerful built man, with a big greatcoat on, a city air, and heavy cane and gloves entered.

"Is this the wayside inn of Dave Ruggles?" he asked, as he entered the hall and closed the door behind him.

"It is, sir," she replied, and the look she gave him would indicate that he had better not trust himself to it.

"I am very glad of it," the stranger made answer, without noticing her warning look. "I suppose you can keep me for the night. The storm is howling wild without and the blinding snow is driving in my face. I am lost, afoot and alone, and would perish if you do not take me in."

"You will perish if you stay here," thought Angie Ruggles, though she said nothing and conducted the stranger to the sitting-room.

The stranger took a seat before the great blazing fire, and his benumbed hands were soon comfortable.

Angie Ruggles prepared him his supper, and he ate heartily. After supper he expressed a desire to retire.

But few words had been spoken, yet he closely observed the sad-faced woman.

She took the candle in her hand and told him she would show him his bedroom.

The fatal room, No. 7, with all its pits, traps, sliding panels and infernal machinery, was reached.

He was shown the bed, and she placed the candle on a stand and turned to leave him.

She paused at the door.

"What is it you wish to say to me?" said the stranger. "Your look and manner indicate that you would tell me something."

"Fly, fly, fly from this horrible place. You are in a robbers' nest. Every one who comes here is murdered in their sleep and robbed."

"Who are the robbers? How many are there of them?"

"There are four: Old Dave Ruggles, Jonathan Ruggles, my husband; Gus Crow and Jim Burns."

"How came you to marry Jonathan Ruggles, the murderer?"

"He came to my father's farmhouse where I lived. He seemed so fair, so noble and kind, that I loved him then. I married him. Since he brought me here, five years ago, he has treated me worse than if I was a dog. I am beaten, my life threatened, and forced to aid them in their villainy."

"Then let me inform you who I am. I am Samuel McBride, a detective, sent from New York City to hunt out these scoundrels and bring them to justice. A young lady and her husband were here ten years ago. He was so foully murdered that the terror and horror at the sight drove her insane. She escaped, she knows not how, and was taken to an asylum. Three weeks ago she recovered her reason, and, going to the city, told the horrible story. Her name is Alice Blakeley, and the young widow is determined to spend the remainder of her life and fortune in avenging her husband's death."

As the detective ceased speaking the woman shuddered and said:

"Such scenes are of common occurrence. I have witnessed many in this den of infamy."

"Are you willing to help me break it up?"

"I am," she replied.

"Are you brave? Are your nerves steady?" asked the detective.

"Steady as steel," she replied.

The detective then produced a pair of revolvers, and asked her to show him the various traps and pits in the room.

She did so.

The detective then made an effigy and placed it in the bed in the position of a man sleeping.

"Take this pistol and get in that corner," he said to Angie. She did so. "Now, conceal the candle, yet leave it so we can have it at a moment's notice."

She placed a box over it, which left the room in utter darkness.

One stood in each corner of the room holding a cocked revolver.

Midnight came, and the soft tread of men ascending the stairway could be heard.

The panel was shoved back and the light of a lantern fell across to the bed.

Then, one, two, three, and four men entered the room.

The panel closed, as if by a spring, and they advanced toward the bed.

Old Dave Ruggles raised his dagger and plunged it to the hilt in the effigy.

Crack! went a pistol from behind, and with a yell he fell dead across the bed.

The others, with yells of terror, turned.

At this moment Angie kicked the box from over the candle, and they saw both her and the detective, each with a cocked pistol.

With a terrible oath and uplifted dirk Angie's husband sprang towards her.

Crack! went her pistol, and her tyrant lay dead at her feet.

"Surrender, or I will shoot you both down," cried the detective, leveling a revolver in each hand on the two murderers.

They cowered before those dark muzzles, and fell back to the wall.

"Drop those knives!" the detective shouted.

They fell with a ring to the floor.

The detective ordered them to hold up their hands, and gave Angie Ruggles two pairs of handcuffs, which she placed on their wrists.

Both old Dave Ruggles and his son Jonathan were dead.

The others the detective and the heroic woman marched with the next morning ten miles through the snow, to see them safely lodged in jail.

Angie Ruggles returns to her father's home, where she had long been mourned as dead.

She was chief witness against James Burns and Gus Crow, both of whom were tried and hanged.

Mrs. Alice Blakeley rewarded Samuel McBride, the detective, by willing him all her property at her death, for avenging her husband's murder and breaking up the robbers' nest.

She only survived the destruction of the den a few months, and left McBride a wealthy man.

FROM ALL POINTS

MOSQUITOES CLOSE MILLS.

The Gulf Coast region of East Texas and the western part of Louisiana have been afflicted with the worst scourge of mosquitoes ever known.

Several large lumber mills were forced to close down on account of the pest. Men and animals were tortured by the bites of the insects. Cattle and horses were attacked by veritable hordes of mosquitoes and the animals huddle together in groups in an effort to protect themselves as much as possible from the bites.

Upon the farms smudge fires were kept burning constantly to drive away the pests, but these efforts seemed to be of little avail.

FIREMAN SAVES BABY.

Coon Valley, Wis., residents are talking of applying for a Carnegie medal for Fireman Peter Hensgen of the La Crosse and Southeastern. He was in a freight engine cab when he saw a child in the distance on the track.

It was down grade and the brakes were slow to grip. Hensgen climbed out along the foot board to the pilot, grasped a rod and leaned down.

He grabbed the sleeping child with his free hand and lifted her from the track. The child was the little daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Elmer Jacobson. She had wandered away in the afternoon and lay down, tired, between the rails and went to sleep.

THE CHARLESTON CHIMES.

While the old world boasts of many famous bells and chimes, to which clings the association of romance and poetry, there are no bells in the world that have had a more adventurous career than those of St. Michael's, at Charleston, S. C. The bells composing it have crossed the ocean no less than five times—once as a heap of twisted metal.

The St. Michael bells were cast in England some time before the Revolutionary War and brought to this country, an exchange states. When the war against the old country began the Charleston peal was sent back to England so that it might not be injured. Upon the conclusion of the war the Charlestonians clamored for their bells, and it became the duty of our first minister to Great Britain to see that they were returned. His negotiations were successful and the bells were, with much ceremony, re-instated in the church.

Their next adventure came with the Civil War, when the steeple of St. Michael's was made a target for the guns of the besiegers. The bells were removed for safety to Columbia, but when the army of Sherman occupied that town the sheds of the yard

of the Statehouse wherein the bells had been stored were broken into and the bells smashed into fragments, the sheds being fired.

The bells were, not, however, completely "done for." At the close of the war the pieces were carefully gathered and shipped to Liverpool, together with directions as to how they should be recast, the specifications being taken from the records of St. Michael's, which showed where the bells had been cast and the proportions.

It was found that the firm of bell-founders which had cast the bells in the first place was still in existence, consisting of descendants of the original firm. The records of this firm showed that the proportions of the casting corresponded with those of record at St. Michael's, and so, under those circumstances, the recasting of the bells was not so difficult a matter. Accordingly, for the fifth time, they crossed the ocean and were set up at Charleston.

LADDERS FOR FISH TO CLIMB UPON.

Do you know that fish actually jump 100-foot dams in their migrations each spring to the headwaters of the rivers in which they spawn? asks the Popular Science Monthly.

Of course, this 100-foot jump is not made all in one leap, but in a number of short leaps of eight inches each. This feat is made possible by what is called a fish ladder.

This ladder must be placed in all river dams in which fish such as salmon swim up to the river heads to spawn. Fish will not spawn anywhere except in the still headwaters, and it is necessary that they arrive there with the least exertion. The Government makes it obligatory that at least one fish ladder be built into every dam across such rivers.

Fish ladders, while they may be built of wood, stone or concrete, according to the material of which the dam is constructed, are all alike in principle, and consist of a trough which begins at water level on the low side of the dam, and then extends upward in several zig-zag steps to a point below the water level on the up-side of the stream. Water enters at the top end and flows down and out at the bottom. Its flow, however, is not free like that in a sluice, but is retarded by means of cross-pieces at regular intervals in the trough.

The water in the ladder is continually flowing down and out at the bottom, forming a running stream, up which the fish may swim, with a choice of passing from the first pool to the next and so on up by swimming through the top notches from one pool to the next higher one. The jump in the latter case is not more than eight inches, and can be done easily by almost any kind of fish.

ARTICLES OF ALL KINDS

WOMAN SMOKER ENDS LIFE.

Mrs. Mary Bilanow, thirty, killed herself at her home, 27 Orchard street, Lodi, N. J., the other day by inhaling gas. Her husband told the police she was a nervous wreck from excessive cigarette smoking and coffee drinking. He said she smoked at times four packages of cigarettes a day and used from three to four pounds of coffee a week.

Several cigarette butts were found on a table in the room where Mrs. Bilanow died. She was married two years ago and started to smoke a year later, her husband said.

SNAKE SAFE IN HER SWEEPER.

Mrs. F. B. Snyder, of Hood River, Ore., was interrupted the other morning in her housecleaning and her carpet sweeper was left on a porch. When she resumed her work the sweeper could not be operated. On investigating Mrs. Snyder discovered that a three-foot garter snake had coiled itself around one of the rollers of the carpet sweeper. The family cat was an eager spectator as Mrs. Snyder opened the carpet sweeper, and the housewife has come to the conclusion that the snake had sought the unique retreat to escape the claws of tabby, an animal that has become known in the neighborhood for its frequent snake catches.

GIRLS LIVE ON PEANUTS.

Living on nothing but peanuts for three months is the feat just performed by two University of California coeds. The two girls were acting under instructions from Prof. M. E. Jaffa, head of the department of nutrition, who carried on the experiment to test his theory that peanuts are among the best and most concentrated foods available for humans.

The experiment was a complete scientific success.

"We never felt better," said one of them, who insisted that their names be kept secret. But I'll never eat another peanut. I can't bear the sight of them now."

The peanuts cost each girl 15 cents a day, or \$1.50 a week. This cut their expenses down to \$4.20 a month, breaking the record for frugality on the campus.

ECONOMY IN ITALY.

A Government decree, issued recently in Rome, orders all street lights and also lights in stores, hotels and cafes, dimmed at 10:30 o'clock in the evening. This is another measure in the continuation of the energetic movement to force national economy, the first measure having been the raising of the price of sugar to 25 cents a pound and also

prohibiting its sale for the manufacture of candles or other sweets.

The government is also making a campaign against speculators in foodstuffs and wearing apparel. A semi-official warning has been published saying that peace is yet distant, and that any merchant making a big profit from his goods at the present moment is a traitor to his country.

Men's, women's and children's shoes are selling at from \$6 to \$9 per pair, and woolen and other articles have doubled in price. Foods produced in Italy, of which the exportation is prohibited, are in the hands of speculators. Eggs have disappeared from the markets.

HAD NITROGLYCERINE CAP IN HIS POCKET.

Miss May E. Dillon, a teacher in the primary grade of the schools of Oakbrook, Pa., only realized the next day how narrowly she had escaped death. She was forced to reprimand one of her pupils the other day and used a ruler. The next day she learned that the culprit had a nitroglycerine cap in his pocket at the time.

Lawrence Hine, six years old, one of the pupils, found a cap of the explosive in a stone quarry and distributed some caps among his friends. The next day the owner of the caps called at the school and all the caps were recovered from the pockets and desks of the pupils, who for twenty-four hours were in danger of being hurled in mid-air together with their schoolhouse and teachers.

PEACOCK FLOATED TO SEA ON A SPAR.

Clarence Peacock, a young mechanic, went swimming in August in San Francisco Bay, just inside the Golden Gate, and was carried out to sea on a spar he grasped when caught by the undertow and floated, partly unconscious, thirty-two hours before he was picked up by a Swedish ship off the Farrallone Islands and taken to Seattle. He wired his wife, who had given him up for dead, but she didn't get the message, and she fainted when he walked into her home a few days ago.

The Swedish crew had to pick Peacock and the spar from the water and cut it away from Peacock's bruised and bleeding body, he said. They applied restoratives, but he did not come to his senses for several hours. Then he found no one on the vessel spoke English. He said he couldn't make out the vessels name, but learned she had come around Cape Horn from Europe.

Peacock's clothes were found after he disappeared and turned into police headquarters. Notices were published in local newspapers of his death. When he got back he stalked into the property clerk's room at headquarters to get the wearing apparel.

WILD WEST WEEKLY

- 713 Young Wild West at "Coyote Camp"; or, Spoiling a Lynching Bee.
 714 Young Wild West the Lasso King; or, The Crooked Gang of "Straight" Ranch.
 715 Young Wild West's Game of Chance; or, Saved by Arletta.
 716 Young Wild West and "Cayuse Kilty"; or, The Queen of the Broncho Busters.
 717 Young Wild West's Steady Hand; or, The Shot that Made a Million.
 718 Young Wild West and the Plute Princess; or, The Trail that Led to the Lost Land.
 719 Young Wild West's Cowboy Carnival; or, The Round-up at Roaring Ranch.
 720 Young Wild West and the Girl in Green; or, A Lively Time at Silver Plume.
 721 Young Wild West's Long Range Shot; or, Arletta's Ride for Life.
 722 Young Wild West and the Stranded Show; or, Waking the Prairie Pilgrims.
 723 Young Wild West's Life at Stake; or, The Strategy of Arletta.
 724 Young Wild West's Prairie Pioneers; or, Fighting the Way to the Golden Loop.
 725 Young Wild West and Nevada Nan; or, The Wild Girl of the Sierras.
 726 Young Wild West in the Bad Lands; or, Hemmed In by Redskins.

- 727 Young Wild West at Nugget Flats; or, Arletta's Streak of Luck.
 728 Young Wild West's Grizzly Hunt; or, The Rival Rangers of the Rockies.
 729 Young Wild West's Buckskin Brigade; or, Helping the Cavalrymen.
 730 Young Wild West at Magic Mark; or, Showing Them How to Run the Camp.
 731 Young Wild West's Duel With Death; or, Arletta to the Rescue.
 732 Young Wild West's Cowboy Band; or, The Tune They Played in Deadwood.
 733 Young Wild West's Indian Scout; or, Arletta and the Pawnee Maiden.
 734 Young Wild West and the "Salted" Mine; or, The Double Game for a Million.
 735 Young Wild West's Overland Route; or, The Masked Band of Death Pass.
 736 Young Wild West's Iron Grip; or, Settling a Cowboy Feud.
 737 Young Wild West's Last Chance; or, Arletta's Narrow Escape.
 738 Young Wild West and the Gold Grabbers; or, The Flight for the Widow's Claim.
 739 Young Wild West and the Branded Band; or, The Scourge of Skeleton Skit.
 740 Young Wild West's Double Danger; or, The Sign of the Secret Seven.

For sale by all newsdealers, or will be sent to any address on receipt of price, 5 cents per copy, in money or postage stamps, by
FRANK TOUSEY, Publisher, - - - - - 168 West 23d St., N. Y.

IF YOU WANT ANY BACK NUMBERS

of our weeklies and cannot procure them from newsdealers, they can be obtained from this office direct. Write out and fill in your Order and send it to us with the price of the weeklies you want and we will send them to you by return mail. POSTAGE STAMPS TAKEN THE SAME AS MONEY.

FRANK TOUSEY, Publisher, - - - - - 168 West 23d St., N. Y.

OUR TEN-CENT HAND BOOKS

No. 46. HOW TO MAKE AND USE ELECTRICITY.—A description of the wonderful uses of electricity and electro magnetism; together with full instructions for making Electric Toys, Batteries, etc. By George A. M., M.D. Containing over fifty illustrations.

No. 47. HOW TO BREAK, RIDE AND DRIVE A HORSE.—A complete treatise on the horse. Describing the most useful horses for business, the best horses for the road; also valuable recipes for diseases peculiar to the horse.

No. 48. HOW TO BUILD AND SAIL CANOES.—A handy book for boys, containing full directions for constructing canoes and the most popular manner of sailing them. Fully illustrated.

No. 49. HOW TO DEBATE.—Giving rules for conducting debates, outlines for debates, questions for discussion, and the best sources for procuring information on the question given.

No. 50. HOW TO STUFF BIRDS AND ANIMALS.—A valuable book, giving instructions in collecting, preparing, mounting and preserving birds, animals and insects.

No. 51. HOW TO DO TRICKS WITH CARDS.—Containing explanations of the general principles of sleight-of-hand applicable to card tricks; of card tricks with ordinary cards, and not requiring sleight-of-hand; of tricks involving sleight-of-hand, or the use of specially prepared cards. Illustrated.

No. 52. HOW TO PLAY CARDS.—Giving the rules and full directions for playing Euchre, Cribbage, Casino, Forty-Five, Rounce, Pedro Sancho, Draw Poker, Auction Pitch, All Fours, and many other popular games of cards.

No. 53. HOW TO WRITE LETTERS.—A wonderful little book, telling you how to write to your sweetheart, your father, mother, sister, brother, employer; and, in fact, everybody and anybody you wish to write to.

No. 54. HOW TO KEEP AND MANAGE PETS.—Giving complete information as to the manner and method of raising, keeping, taming, breeding and managing all kinds of pets; also giving full instructions for making cages, etc. Fully explained by twenty-eight illustrations.

No. 55. HOW TO COLLECT STAMPS AND COINS.—Containing valuable information regarding the collecting and arranging of stamps and coins. Handsomely illustrated.

No. 56. HOW TO BECOME AN ENGINEER.—Containing full instructions how to become a locomotive engineer; also directions for building a model locomotive; together with a full description of everything an engineer should know.

No. 60. HOW TO BECOME A PHOTOGRAPHER.—Containing useful information regarding the Camera and how to work it; also how to make Photographic Magic Lantern Slides and other Transparencies. Handsomely illustrated.

No. 62. HOW TO BECOME A WEST POINT MILITARY CADET.—Explains how to gain admittance, course of Study, Examinations, Duties, Staff of Officers, Post Guard, Police Regulations, Fire Department, and all a boy should know to be a cadet. By Lu Senarens.

No. 63. HOW TO BECOME A NAVAL CADET.—Complete instructions of how to gain admission to the Annapolis Naval Academy. Also containing the course of instruction, description of grounds and buildings, historical sketch, and everything a boy should know to become an officer in the United States Navy. By Lu Senarens.

No. 64. HOW TO MAKE ELECTRICAL MACHINES.—Containing full directions for making electrical machines, induction coils, dynamos, and many novel toys to be worked by electricity. By R. A. R. Bennet. Fully illustrated.

No. 65. MULDOON'S JOKES.—The most original joke book ever published, and it is brimful of wit and humor. It contains a large collection of songs, jokes, conundrums, etc., of Terrence Muldoon, the great wit, humorist, and practical joker of the day.

No. 66. HOW TO DO PUZZLES.—Containing over three hundred interesting puzzles and conundrums, with key to same. A complete book. Fully illustrated.

No. 67. HOW TO DO ELECTRICAL TRICKS.—Containing a large collection of instructive and highly amusing electrical tricks, together with illustrations. By A. Anderson.

No. 68. HOW TO DO CHEMICAL TRICKS.—Containing over one hundred highly amusing and instructive tricks with chemicals. By A. Anderson. Handsomely illustrated.

No. 69. HOW TO DO SLEIGHT-OF-HAND.—Containing over fifty of the latest and best tricks used by magicians. Also containing the secret of second sight. Fully illustrated.

No. 70. HOW TO MAKE MAGIC TOYS.—Containing full directions for making Magic Toys and devices of many kinds. Fully illustrated.

No. 71. HOW TO DO MECHANICAL TRICKS.—Containing complete illustrations for performing over sixty Mechanical Tricks. Fully illustrated.

No. 72. HOW TO DO SIXTY TRICKS WITH CARDS.—Embracing all of the latest and most deceptive card tricks, with illustrations.

No. 73. HOW TO DO TRICKS WITH NUMBERS.—Showing many curious tricks with figures and the magic of numbers. By A. Anderson. Fully illustrated.

No. 74. HOW TO WRITE LETTERS CORRECTLY.—Containing full instructions for writing letters on almost any subject, also rules for punctuation and composition, with specimen letters.

No. 75. HOW TO BECOME A CONJURER.—Containing tricks with Dominoes, Dice Cups and Balls, Hats, etc. Embracing thirty-six illustrations. By A. Anderson.

No. 76. HOW TO TELL FORTUNES BY THE HAND.—Containing rules for telling fortunes by the aid of lines of the hand, or the secret of palmistry. Also the secret of telling future events by aid of holes, marks, scars, etc. Illustrated.

No. 77. HOW TO DO FORTY TRICKS WITH CARDS.—Containing deceptive Card Tricks as performed by leading conjurers and magicians. Arranged for home amusement. Fully illustrated.

No. 78. HOW TO DO THE BLACK ART.—Containing a complete description of the mysteries of Magic and Sleight-of-hand, together with many wonderful experiments. By A. Anderson. Illustrated.

No. 79. HOW TO BECOME AN ACTOR.—Containing complete instructions how to make up for various characters on the stage, together with the duties of the Stage Manager, Prompter, Scenic Artist and Property Man.

No. 80. GUS WILLIAMS' JOKE BOOK.—Containing the latest jokes, anecdotes and funny stories of this world-renowned German comedian. Sixty-four pages; handsome colored cover, containing a half-tone photo of the author.

No. 81. HOW TO MESMERIZE.—Containing the most approved method of mesmerism; animal magnetism, or, magnetic healing. By Prof. Leo Hugo Koch, A.C.S., author of "How to Hypnotize," etc.

No. 82. HOW TO DO PALMISTRY.—Containing the most approved methods of reading the lines on the hand, together with a full explanation of their meaning. Also explaining phrenology, and the key of telling characters by the bumps on the head. By Leo Hugo Koch, A.C.S. Fully illustrated.

No. 83. HOW TO HYPNOTIZE.—Containing valuable and instructive information regarding the science of hypnotism. Also explaining the most approved methods which are employed by the leading hypnotists of the world. By Leo Hugo Koch, A.C.S.

No. 84. HOW TO BECOME AN AUTHOR.—Containing information regarding the selection of subjects, the use of words and the manner of preparing and submitting manuscripts. Also containing valuable information as to the neatness, legibility and general composition of manuscripts.

For sale by all newsdealers, or will be sent to any address on receipt of price, 10c per copy, or 3 for 25c, in money or postage stamps, by
FRANK TOUSEY, Publisher, - - - - - 168 West 23d St., N. Y.